CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE OFFICE 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

CHILDREN AND YOUTH FIRST: THE *RIGHT* ACTION.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

June 2008

The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Building
Province of Saskatchewan
Regina, Saskatchewan

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*, it is my privilege to submit to you, and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, my third Annual Report as Saskatchewan Children's Advocate.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin M. Bernstein

Marvin M. Bernstein, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.
Children's Advocate
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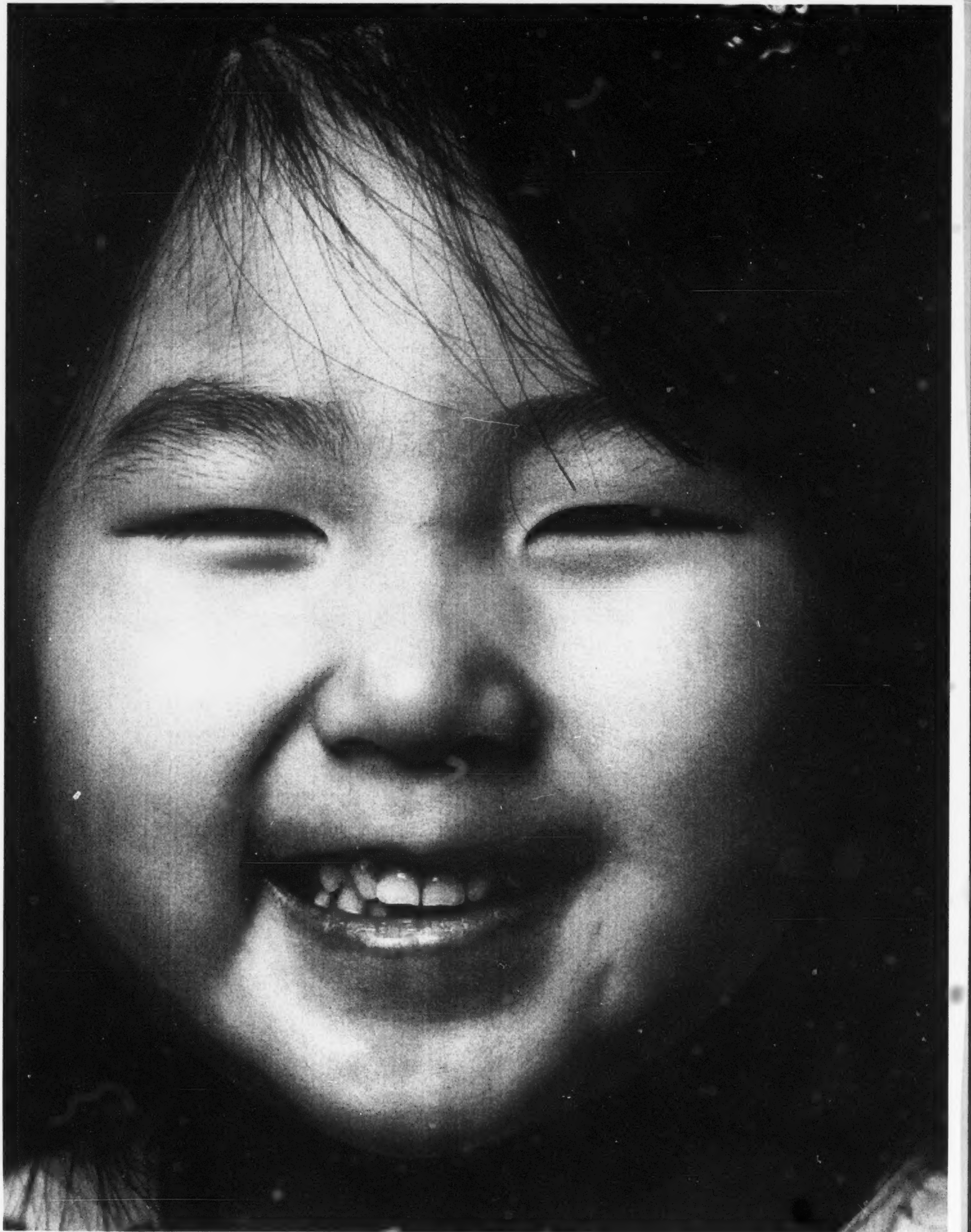

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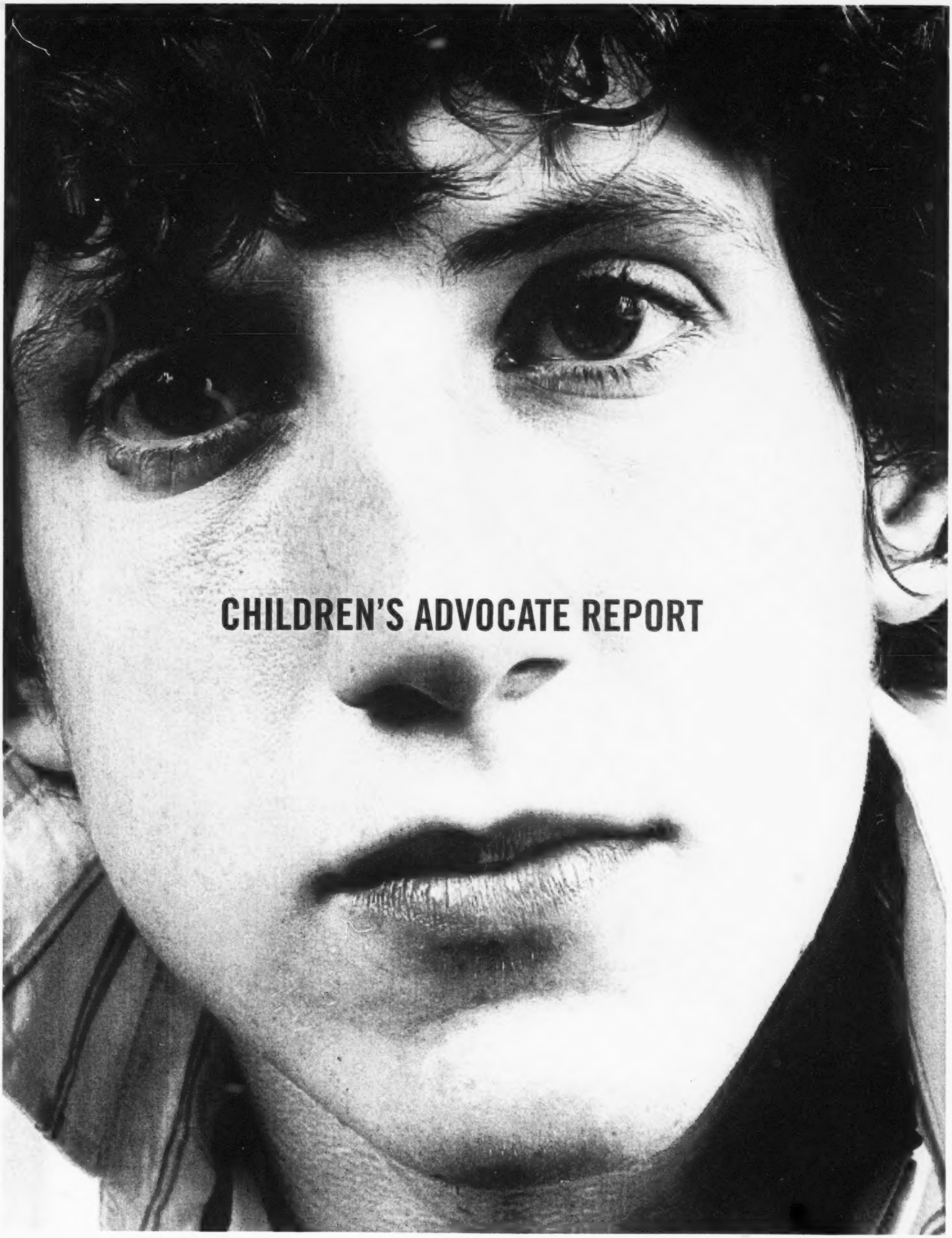
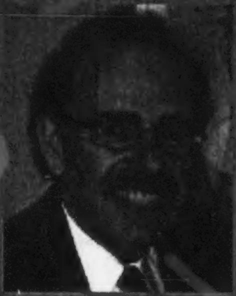


CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE REPORT



My theme for this year's Annual Report is "Children and Youth First: The *Right* Action" because placing children and youth first is critical to ensuring that their best interests, health, well-being, and participation rights are properly safeguarded.

While this year's Annual Report is longer than in previous years, there are several reasons. First, we have included a report card that tracks the performance of the Provincial Government in implementing my Office's recommendations for two calendar years, being 2006 and 2007. Secondly, we had intended to produce a separate Children's Advocate Office Recommendations Progress Report independent of our Annual Report, but that proved to be inconsistent with both our normal reporting cycle and public expectations. Thirdly, since the theme is the importance of the Provincial Government taking the *right* action in placing *Children and Youth First*, it is was considered important to provide more detailed examples as to where the lack of such action has placed children and youth at risk of harm. In this regard, we have, this year, added case examples from our investigation work, as well as from our advocacy activities, to illustrate this point.

This past year has been an important one for the Children's Advocate Office (CAO). It was a year in which we collectively, and through collaboration with various government ministries, First Nations leadership and other stakeholder groups, advocated various action steps in order to transform the 'paper rights' of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*,[1] into 'lived rights'[2] for all Saskatchewan children and youth. From formulating and advancing our *Children and Youth First* Principles in May 2007, my Office initiated discussions with Provincial Government child serving ministries to incorporate these Principles into both proposed and existing legislation, policy, programming and practice applicable to children and youth in receipt of government services. In July of 2007, we proposed to the previous Provincial Government a *Children and Youth First* Action Plan for Saskatchewan. The need for such an Action Plan was also introduced through initial correspondence to the new Provincial Government in late 2007,[3] and it is our understanding that the current government has taken the Principles under consideration and will be informing my Office of its future intentions.

Four action steps are foundational to creating a new *Children and Youth First* Action Plan, anchored by our CAO *Children and Youth First* Principles, which are distilled from those provisions of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* that the CAO has found, based upon cumulative practical experience, to be most crucial to address the needs, interests and rights of Saskatchewan children and youth. They are as follows:[4]

1) A well-articulated and integrated vision that places the needs and interests of *Children and Youth First*;

2) The inclusion of references to both '*Children*' and '*Youth*' in Action Plan, Vision Statement and Core Principles;

3) The endorsement of all eight *Children and Youth First* Principles that will anchor this new *Children and Youth First* Vision; and

4) A commitment to incorporate the *Children and Youth First* Principles into existing and future government policy, practice, programming and legislation.

The Children's Advocate Office's call for the adoption of these four action steps is in keeping with a number of recent important provincial and national developments that occurred during 2007, which have a singular connecting factor – that is, the requirement to adopt and implement a children and youth first or 'child and youth-centred' approach to all that we do as a nation, and more specifically, as a province. These significant recent developments are as follows:

1) The recommendations set out in the recent Report of the Canadian Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, entitled '*Children: The Silenced Citizens*',[5] which reinforce the need for the Federal and Provincial Governments to honour their respective international human rights commitments to implement the provisions of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

2) The recent Judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Syl Apps Secure Treatment Centre v. B.D.*,[6] where that Court unanimously ruled that government ministries and child welfare agencies have the right to intervene in the lives of families, without fear of being sued by parents or other family members, in order to protect vulnerable children who are at risk of harm.

3) Within a First Nations context, the recent vote in Parliament on December 12, 2007, that led to the unanimous endorsement of Jordan's Principle,[7] which is a 'child-first' principle for resolving inter-jurisdictional disputes involving First Nations children.

4) National Child Day celebrated on November 20th, marked the 18th year since the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Consequently, Saskatchewan and Canadian youth reaching the age of eighteen, as of November 20, 2007, were the first generation of children to have been born with universal rights under the *Convention*, and were likewise, as of that date, the first generation to be aging out of its prescribed child-based entitlements.

5) The *Children and Youth First* Principles were read into the record by the Saskatchewan Party, calling for their adoption by the then New Democratic Party Government, one day after they were tabled in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.[8]

From a quantitative point of view, it is noteworthy that only 62% of our total recommendations tracked from 2005 to 2007 have resulted in adequate action being taken. As a consequence, it is even more imperative for government to endorse the *Children and Youth First* Principles and the *Children and Youth First* Action Plan proposed by the Children's Advocate Office, thereby resulting in government adopting the fundamental vision and principles contained within the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.*[10]

As well, a deeper, more qualitative analysis of the recommendations clearly indicates that many of the 'core' recommendations needed to ensure a *Children and Youth First* philosophy, and to promote the best interests, health, well-being, and participation rights of children and youth, continue to lay dormant. In other words, some of the more fundamental CAO recommendations that are central to the success of the *Children and Youth First* Principles have not yet been accepted or implemented. It is not only the quantity of recommendations implemented that is important; it is also the quality and significance of the changes the recommendations will make to the various child-serving systems that is of paramount importance to the children and youth of this province.

A qualitative analysis of the recommendations made to the Provincial Government by the Children's Advocate Office also demonstrates that if, in fact, the proposed *Children and Youth First* Principles had been implemented and acted upon, many of the corrective recommendations would not have had to be made in the first place. Critical changes needed to correct deficiencies continue to be made on an ad hoc, and often patchwork basis. Adopting the *Children and Youth First* Principles offers the government the opportunity to be proactive, by endorsing and implementing these Principles, while ensuring their adherence in daily operations throughout the child-serving ministries and agencies it oversees.

Saskatchewan has always prided itself on its leadership role and commitment to the social well-being of its citizens. Thus, Saskatchewan should be at the forefront of ensuring that the 'paper rights', often cited as proof of its concern for our children, become the 'lived rights' of reality for those same children. Saskatchewan has the opportunity to provide leadership and direction to others regarding a very significant element of our future success – the best interests, health, well-being, and participation rights of our children and youth.

We cannot continue to accept "delay", "review" and "under consideration" as the "norms" needed to initiate change. A delay of six months in the life of a 50 year old is but a blink in time. However, to a young child of two years and in need of protection, six months represents 25% of that child's life. The relevance of time is significantly different for a child than for an adult. Any delay has a tremendous impact on the health and well-being of a child or youth in need of protection. This point has been recognized in other Canadian jurisdictions.[11]

It has been close to two years since the 'core' recommendations related to the systemic issues associated with the Children's Advocate Office's Oyate Report[12] were presented. The outstanding recommendations are outlined in the Active Recommendation section of this Annual Report. These 'systemic issues' recommendations are seminal to the *Children and Youth First* Principles necessary to protect the best interests, health, well-being, and participation rights of Saskatchewan Children. Sadly, some of the youth that the CAO recommendations were designed to help will have now graduated into adulthood – without experiencing the benefit of these 'systemic issues' recommendations being implemented.[13]

Similarly, the Individual, Group and Systemic Investigation and Advocacy work of the Children's Advocate Office continues to reveal the damage done to children and youth through ineffective permanency planning. This issue has resulted in a number of recommendations, each time evoking a response from government of promises to "do better". Yet, the CAO continues to face this issue on a regular and continuing basis. Again, critical CAO recommendations proposed in the Oyate Safe House Systemic Issues Report - where the CAO found that many of the sexually exploited youth residing at Oyate had gone through a 'revolving door' of in-care and out-of-care placements and that the average age at which they had first been involved with the Provincial Government's child welfare authorities was at two years and ten months of age - have not yet been implemented.[14]

The Children's Advocate Office has also provided significant recommendations concerning the issue of access to justice and the participation rights of children and youth, particularly those involved in court proceedings under *The Child and Family Services Act*. In this regard, independent legal representation for children and youth in child welfare proceedings is an issue that has been identified within the CAO for systemic advocacy, due in large part to the individual cases handled by the CAO, where young persons state that everyone else's voice is being heard in the court proceedings, but not theirs, even though they stand at the very centre of those proceedings. There is also concern that the lack of the direct participation of children and youth has, at times, caused the courts to make decisions which are neither informed, nor consistent with the best interests of those same children and youth.

The Children's Advocate Office has categorized the inequities of the Saskatchewan legislative framework in a previous News Release.[15] In that release, we stated that current provincial legislation, unlike child welfare legislation in most other Canadian jurisdictions: 1) fails to explicitly make children parties to child welfare proceedings, regardless of age; 2) fails to stipulate any clear authority for independent representation to be ordered by the court; 3) fails to set out any criteria for a court to consider before deciding on the value of such independent representation; and 4) fails to ensure that there is a level playing field of uniform jurisdiction in all courts across the province to order such legal representation. Four important recommendations intended to address these fundamental inequities have not yet been implemented and remain under review.[16]

After serving as Saskatchewan's Children's Advocate for close to three years, I have concluded that, at the core of the multi-faceted challenges facing children and youth in Saskatchewan, is the urgent need by government to place these vulnerable persons 'first' and at the 'centre' of its range of services. As I reported in my *2006 Annual Report*, we require a paradigm shift in attitude, policy, practice and legislation in order to effectively implement a *Children and Youth First* vision in Saskatchewan. Specifically, the Supreme Court of Canada Judgment referred to earlier[17] has particular relevance for Saskatchewan, where the current child welfare system is grounded in family-centred legislation, policy, programming and practice. The direct impact on children and youth is that this family-centred approach, in combination with inconsistent child welfare practice and an uneven application of relevant policy to all children, has lessened the necessary vigilance to child safety, protection and well-being, and the ability of service providers to consistently place the needs and interests of *Children and Youth First*. Adding to the danger that children already face, is the system-generated confusion exhibited, at times, by child protection authorities as to whether the primary client is the 'parent', the 'family' or the 'child'.

This inertia and delay in taking the 'right' action to place *Children and Youth First* are particularly worrisome, since I believe that the recurring and consistent themes confronting my Office - particularly in the child welfare area - and referred to in this Annual Report, lead to the inevitable conclusion that without the adoption and implementation of these *Children and Youth First* Principles, the cycle of recurring harm to children and youth will continue. That is, my Office will continue to make recommendations that address deficiencies in a system that is 'family-centred' – instead of being 'child-centred' - while the provincial child serving ministries and agencies involved will continue to implement my Office's recommendations in a manner that "patches" the problem at best, all at the expense of the best interests of our children and youth. This view is reinforced by my Office's advocacy, investigations (particularly into child deaths and child critical injuries), research and public education work, as well as our daily interaction with the children and youth who are served and impacted by the child welfare system administered by the former Department of Community Resources (now Ministry of Social Services). Unfortunately, in all of these areas, we see far too many instances where the emphasis on safety, protection and well-being of children and youth is diminished in order to preserve the family unit at any cost, or to achieve perceived political, jurisdictional or financial advantages.

The following comments, which I made in my introductory Children's Advocate Report to the CAO *2006 Annual Report*, continue to be applicable to this year's discussion:

"...in our Oyate Investigative and Systemic Reports, we have already documented our findings: 1) that the Department of Community Resources [now Ministry of Social Services] continues to set policy through its restrictive 'Family-Centred' Services Policy and Procedures Manual; and 2) that Saskatchewan's Child and Family Services Act is out of step with most child protection statutes across Canada, as well as Article 3(1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in failing to recognize that the paramount consideration is the 'best interests of the child'."[18]

In conclusion, it is not sufficient for the *Children and Youth First* Principles or *Children and Youth First* Action Plan to be reduced to simple platitudes or reflect only 'future good intentions' – they must, instead, be given a sense of urgency and translated into 'passionate action'.[19] We must recognize the fact that what we consider to be a "normal course of action" and "reasonable waiting period" for change has a far more significant meaning and effect when considering the life of a child, who has a different sense of time than that of an adult.

We must, as individuals, families, a province, and community, pledge a stronger commitment to this new second generation of children with rights under the *Convention*. A full 18 years has passed representing 100% of the lifetime of a complete generation of children and youth who have not received the rights and entitlements promised to them. We must all take immediate action and seek opportunities to make a tangible difference in their lives and to ensure that they have the capacity to practically access and exercise their rights. In this way, we will go a great distance towards transforming these 'paper rights' into actual 'lived rights' for all Saskatchewan children and youth. This can only happen with a change in our attitude that puts the best interests of our *Children and Youth First*, ahead of all other considerations, thereby ensuring they are at the very 'heart' of every decision taken on their behalf. This is the legacy we owe our children and youth and they deserve no less from all of us.[20]

Respectfully Submitted,

Marvin M. Bernstein

Marvin M. Bernstein, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.
Children's Advocate
Province of Saskatchewan

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[1] United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989), available online at www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.html.

[2] The phrase, 'lived rights' was repeatedly used in contradistinction to 'theoretical rights' at the *Chains and Links: Human Rights Activism* Conference, Saskatoon, November 1-2, 2007.

[3] In fairness, it is acknowledged that the Saskatchewan Party did not form the official government until November 2007, so that while it is being asked to respond to CAO recommendations, it was in power for less than 2 months prior to the end of this 2007 calendar year reporting period.

[4] These four *Children and Youth First* Action Plan steps were also previously made public: See M.M. Bernstein, Commentary, published as *Court's Judgment on Child Care Chance for Saskatchewan*, Saskatoon Star Phoenix, August 9, 2007, and as *Children: The Proper Focus*, Regina Leader Post, August 13, 2007.

[5] Senate of Canada, Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, *Children: The Silenced Citizens. Effective Implementation of Canada's International Obligations with Respect to the Rights of Children - Final Report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights* (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, April 2007), available online at www.senate-senat.ca/rights-droits.asp.

[6] *Syl Apps Secure Treatment Centre v. B.D.*, 2007 SCC 38, [2007] S.C.J. 38.

[7] This Principle has been formally endorsed in this Province by the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, among others.

[8] Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Hansard's Transcript, per Ted Merriman, May 16, 2007 at 1648.

[9] Only 51 of the 82 aggregate CAO recommendations tracked from 2005 to 2007, inclusive have been fully implemented.

[10] This would be consistent with the Saskatchewan Government's prior endorsement of the *Convention* on December 11, 1991.

[11] See, for example, the Preamble to Prince Edward Island's *Child Protection Act*, S.P.E.I. 2000, c. 3, which states, among other things, that *"AND WHEREAS children have a concept of time and developmental capacity that is different from that of adults, and services provided and proceedings taken pursuant to this Act should endeavour to respect the sense of time of a child."*

[12] Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office, *Beyond 'at Risk' Children: Systemic Issues Report regarding Sexually Exploited Children & Oyate Safe House*, September 2006.

[13] See CAO Recommendations SYS.20(06), SYS.21(06), SYS.22(06), SYS.23(06), SYS.24(06), SYS.25(06), and SYS.25(06), none of which have resulted in adequate action being taken. Particular regard should be paid to CAO Recommendation SYS.23(06), which proposes amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act*, including a list of guiding principles, with the paramount consideration being "*to promote the best interests, protection, safety and well-being of children*", as well as a list of service delivery principles and codification of prescribed rights and entitlements for children in care. Please note that CDR.42(99,00), calling for proper management level risk assessment and oversight in the case of multiple child protection referrals before children in long-term care are returned home to prior caregivers, was discontinued and replaced by systemic recommendation SYS.20(06), after it had been rejected twice by the then Department of Community Resources (now Ministry of Social Services).

[14] In particular, see CAO Recommendations SYS.18(06) and SYS.19(06).

[15] CAO News Release, dated January 31, 2008.

[16] CAO Recommendations 06-10840, 06-10841, 06-10842, and 06-10843.

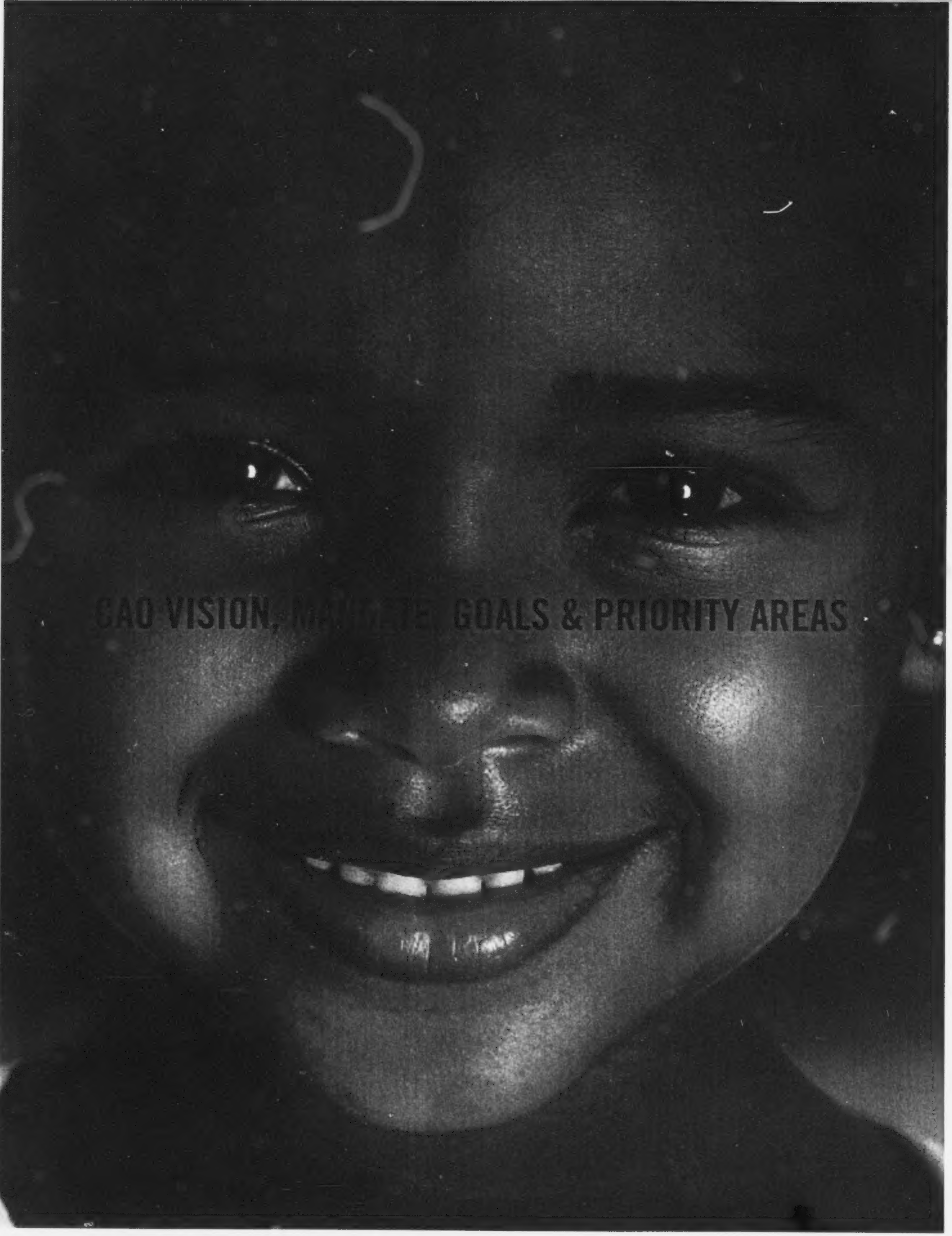
[17] *Supra*, note 6.

[18] Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office, *2006 Annual Report, Children and Youth First: The Right Focus.*

[19] This phrase is taken from the theme of the Prairie Child Welfare Symposium, *Passion for Action: Building on Strength and Innovative Changes in Child and Family Services*, Regina, September 12-14, 2007

[20] This last paragraph is taken from a presentation given at the Prairie Child Welfare Symposium, *Passion for Action: Building on Strength and Innovative Changes in Child and Family Services*, Regina, September 14, 2007, and may appear in a publication that will include expanded versions of various Papers presented at that Symposium.

CAO VISION, MANDATE, GOALS & PRIORITY AREAS



VISION

The Vision Statement of the Children's Advocate Office (CAO) exemplifies the powers and responsibilities of the Children's Advocate, Mr. Marvin Bernstein, and, by delegated authority, the CAO:

The interests and well-being of children and youth are respected and valued in our communities and in government practice, policy and legislation.

MANDATE

The Children's Advocate is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and acts pursuant to *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*. The Children's Advocate has the legislated responsibilities, among other things, to:

- become involved in public education respecting the interests and well-being of children;
- receive, review, and investigate any matter concerning a child or group of children, or services to a child or group of children, by any government ministry or agency; and
- resolve these matters, where appropriate, through non-adversarial approaches and/or to make recommendations on such matters.

The Children's Advocate may also conduct research, or advise any minister responsible, on any matter relating to the interests and well-being of children.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

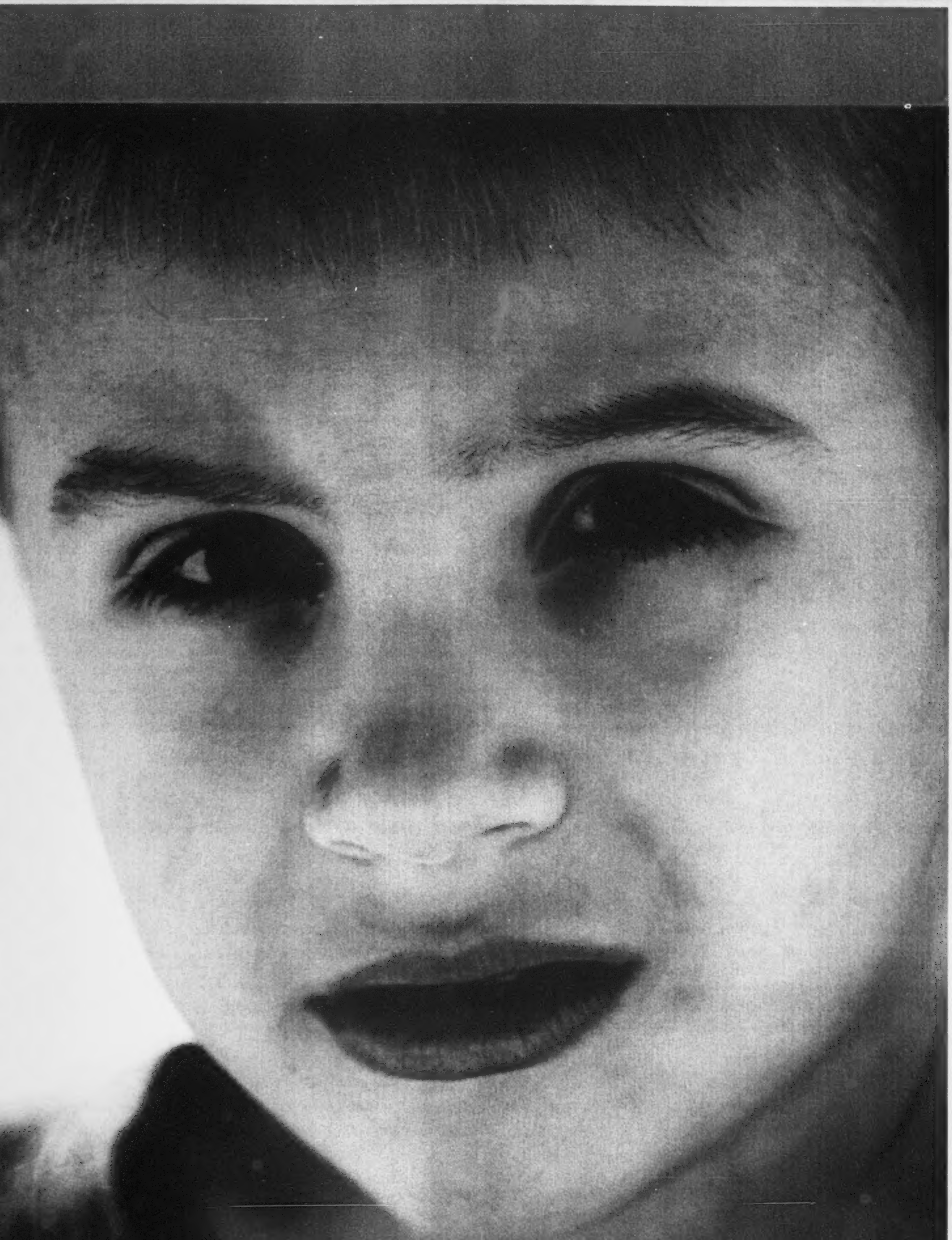
The Children's Advocate Office has identified five overarching goals for the organization that represent the Vision and Mandate of the CAO. The goals outline the types of activities that the CAO will undertake in order to promote the protection of the rights of children and young people and ensure that they receive the level of service they need, and are entitled to, from the Government of Saskatchewan. These goals guide the direction that the CAO takes in its relationship with children and young people, government ministries, delegated agencies and the public at large. These goals are to:

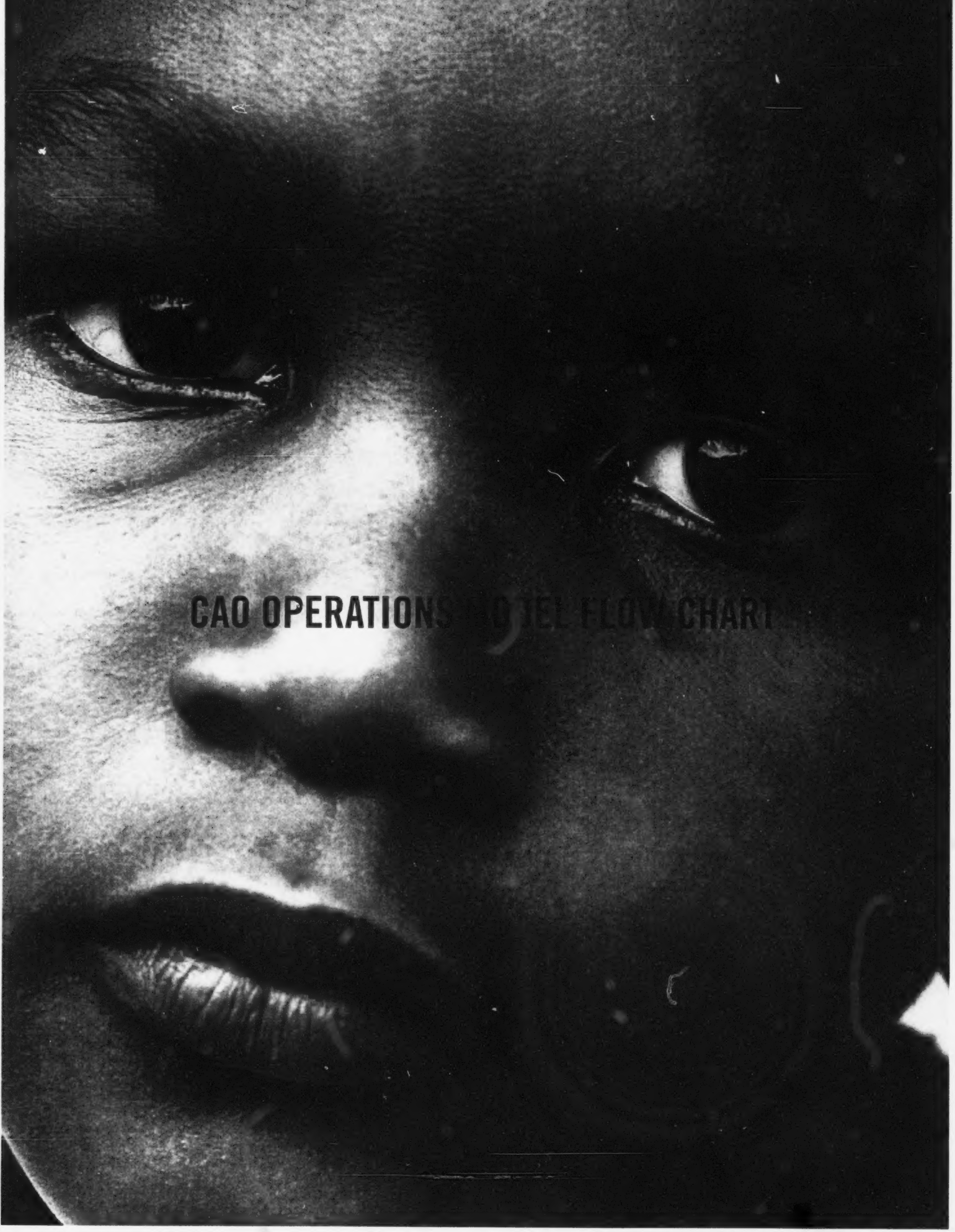
- advocate for the interests and well-being of children and youth;
- effect systemic change to promote the interests and well-being of children and youth;
- promote public accountability through comprehensive investigations;
- educate people on the interests and well-being of children and youth; and
- to provide high quality service.

PRIORITY AREAS

The operational activities of the Children's Advocate Office focus on five key priority areas. Each of these areas contributes in a significant way to the CAO's ability to identify key issues, increase awareness of challenges and opportunities, promote systemic change, and advocate with, and on behalf of, children and young people. They are as follows:

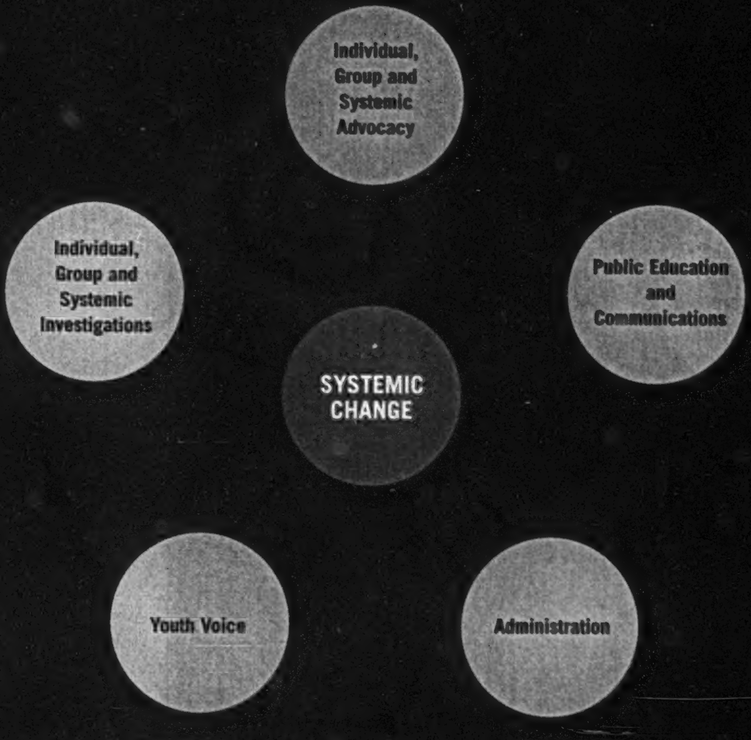
- Individual, Group and Systemic Advocacy;
- Individual, Group and Systemic Investigations;
- Public Education and Communications;
- Youth Voice; and
- Administration.

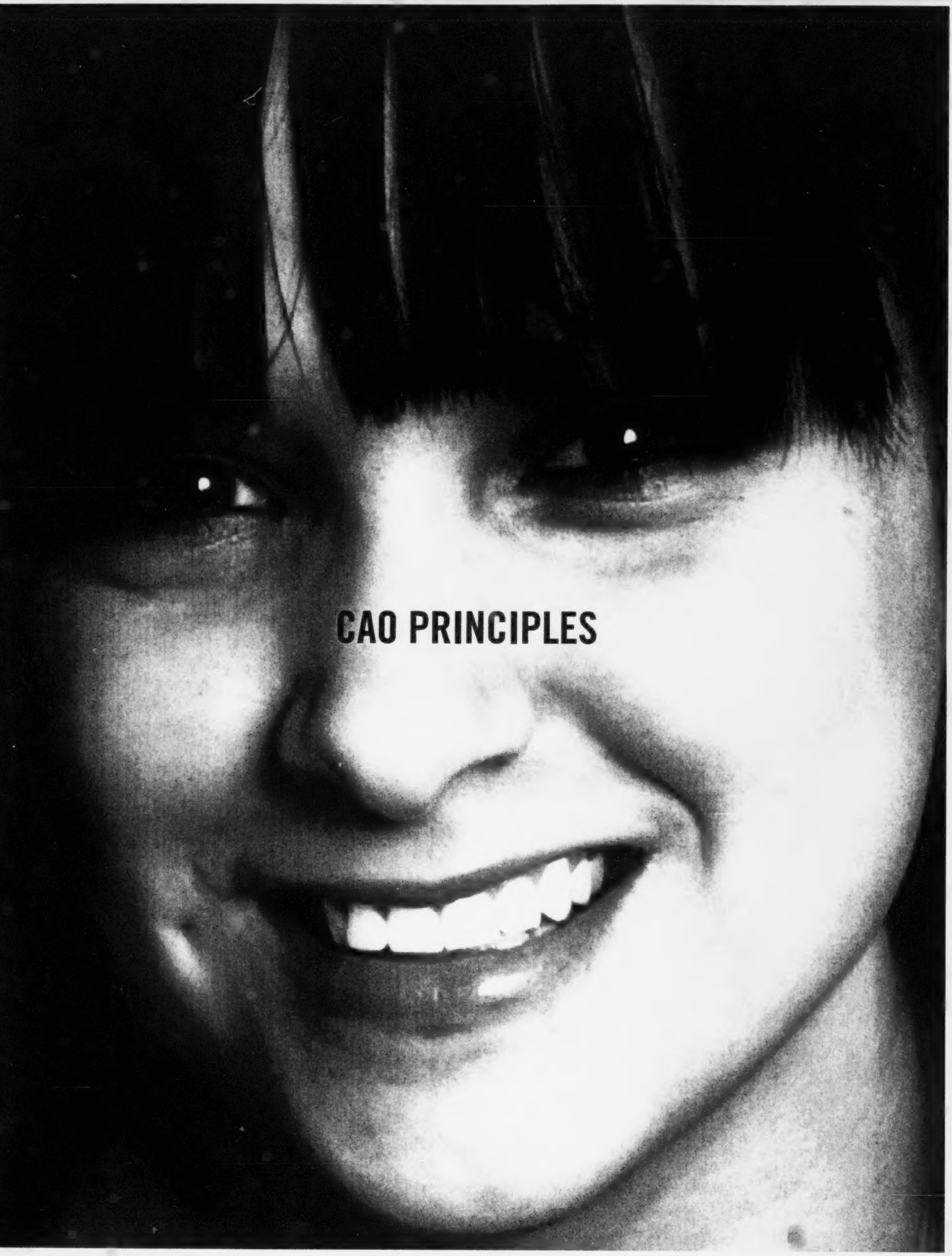




CAO OPERATIONS MODEL FLOW CHART

The following Operations Model Flow Chart demonstrates the interrelationship of each of the priority areas of the Children's Advocate Office. The Operations Model Flow Chart also highlights the commitment the organization has to the central activity of Systemic Change. All operational and administrative functions of the CAO contribute to the advancement of Systemic Change.


Individual, Group and Systemic Advocacy
Individual, Group and Systemic Investigations
Public Education and Communications
SYSTEMIC CHANGE
Youth Voice
Administration



CAO PRINCIPLES

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The Principles that support the day-to-day operations of the Children's Advocate Office highlight the respect, value and dignity established in the relationship that the CAO has with its primary audience, Saskatchewan children and youth.

The Children's Advocate Office believes that all people, particularly children and youth, must be treated with respect, recognizing their inherent dignity as human persons. The CAO will:

- act in accordance with *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*;
- give priority to children and youth in all activities undertaken by the CAO;
- deliver services that are respectful, appropriate, accessible, accountable, timely, lawful, and consistent, irrespective of the child's location, circumstance, culture, or background;
- respect the right to privacy of the child or youth, as well as of all other parties involved in the advocacy process;
- provide services that are consistent with principles of administrative fairness; and
- act in accordance with the Children's Advocate Office Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: CHILDREN AND YOUTH FIRST

The past year has demonstrated, in all aspects of child advocacy - whether advanced at an international, national, or provincial level - that as a society responsible for the well-being and best interests of all children and youth, we require a paradigm shift rooted in changes in attitude, policy, practice and legislation. To this end, in order to do a better job of addressing the needs of children, especially to place the interests of *Children and Youth First* in Saskatchewan, the Children's Advocate Office has developed a set of eight Guiding Principles to establish a child and youth centred direction. These Principles are intended to address the need to integrate and enhance a *Children and Youth First* commitment within all aspects of service provision. They must ultimately permeate all aspects of government and societal activities and inform all actions and decisions.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The *Children and Youth First* Principles are meant to assist in defining our *Children and Youth First* vision and are intended to build upon the current Children's Advocate Office *Operational Principles*. These Principles reflect the core beliefs and values that the CAO will advance in all aspects of its work with government ministries and agencies, as well as with child and youth service sectors and care providers. They are as follows:

1. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to those rights defined by the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

2. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to participate and be heard before any decision affecting them is made.

3. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to have their "best interests" given paramount consideration in any action or decision involving them.

4. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to an equal standard of care, protection and services.

5. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to the highest standard of health and education possible in order that they may reach their fullest potential.

6. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to safety and protection from all forms of physical, emotional and sexual harm while in the care of parents, governments, legal guardians, or any person.

7. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to be treated as the primary client, and at the centre, of all child-serving systems.

8. That *all* children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to have consideration given to the importance of their unique life history and spiritual traditions and practices, in accordance with their stated views and preferences.

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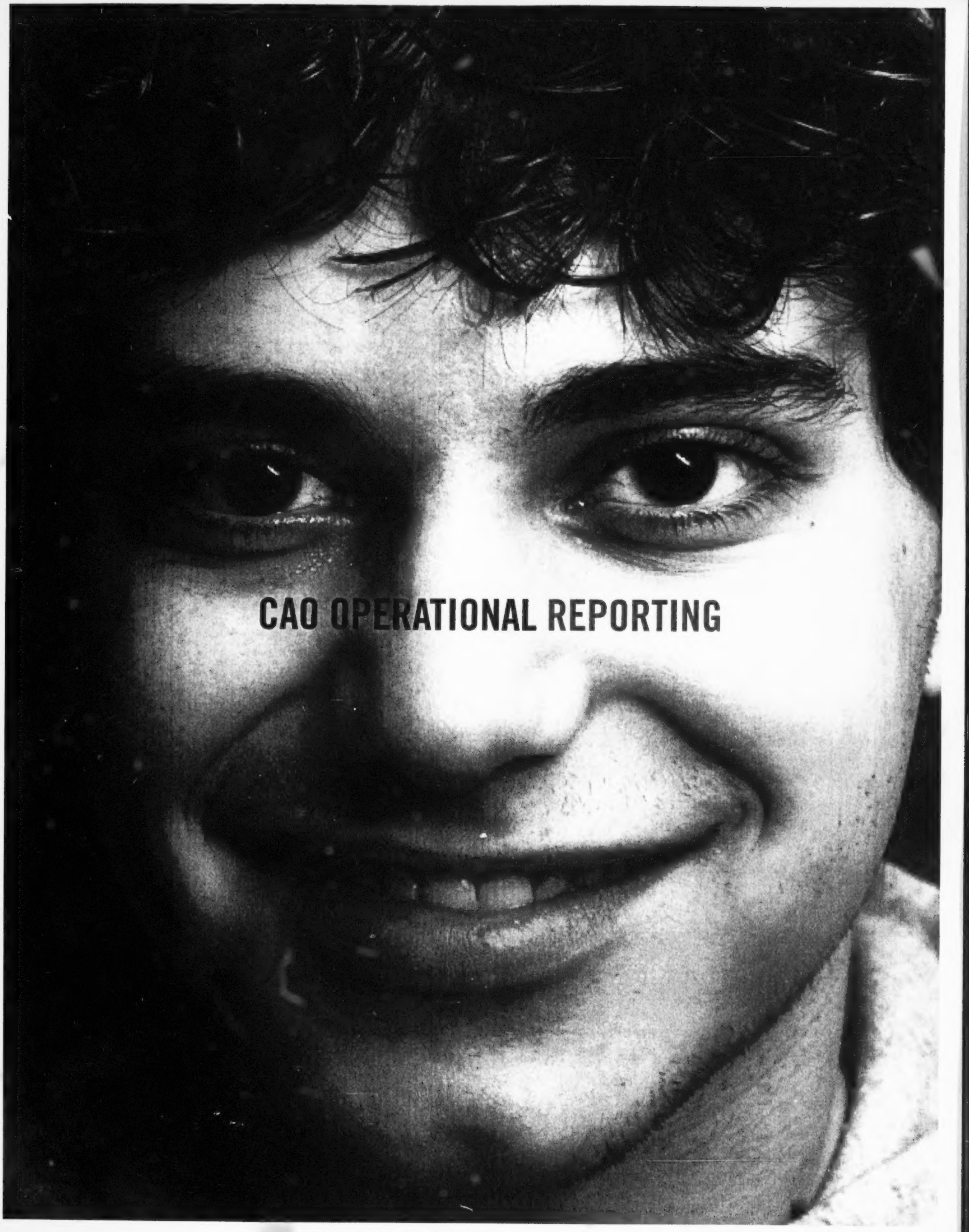


CAO OPERATIONAL REPORTING

INTRODUCTION

The Children's Advocate Office has the authority to promote the interests of, and act as a voice for, children and youth who have concerns about provincial government services. The three core operational functions of the CAO are: A) Individual, Group and Systemic Advocacy; B) Individual, Group and Systemic Investigations; and C) Public Education.

A) INDIVIDUAL, GROUP AND SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

AUTHORITY

The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act[6] establishes the range of services to be provided by the Children's Advocate Office and positions children and youth as the primary clients of the CAO. While the majority of advocacy services are provided to children and youth up to the age of 18, services are available for youth up to age 21 when they are receiving services pursuant to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, or Section 56 of *The Child and Family Services Act*.

The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act directs the Children's Advocate to try and resolve, where appropriate, any matter concerning a child or youth, or group of children or youth and a Ministry or Agency of Government (i.e., First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, Community-based Group Home), using "negotiation, conciliation, mediation, or other non-adversarial approaches."

While referrals may be made by any person and are treated as confidential, the CAO's chief focus is to advocate for children, youth and their natural advocates. This is to ensure the child or youth is receiving services to which he or she is entitled and that the professionals working with the child or youth are meeting their obligations under the legislation, policy and practice applicable within each Ministry and/or Agency of Government. The CAO strives to ensure that services provided to children and youth are founded in a *Children and Youth First* philosophy and that this philosophy is respected and valued within communities and in government legislation, policy and practice.

When the CAO receives a call from a child, youth, or someone calling on behalf of a child or youth, the caller is provided with a continuum of advocacy services, ranging from strategies to assist in self-advocacy to a full investigation of his or her concerns.

WHO IS CALLING?

During 2007, the total number of requests for service from the Children's Advocate Office was 1502, a 10.8% increase in caller volume over 2006. The CAO becomes aware of concerns and issues regarding children and youth from a variety of sources. In 2007, the distribution of callers to the CAO was fairly consistent with previous years. The largest contact group was parents calling on behalf of their own children or youth, representing 47% of the total calls to the CAO. Similar to previous years, children and youth constituted the second largest contact group, at 16%, followed by various professionals including social workers, physicians, teachers, nurses and mental health professionals, at 14%. Requests for service from extended family members represented 10% of callers to the CAO.

WHY ARE THEY CALLING?

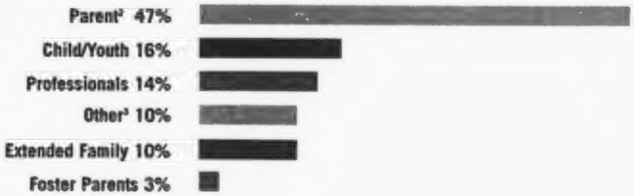
As has been the trend in the past, most of the issues presented to the Children's Advocate Office centre around services provided by the Ministry of Social Services. In 2007, 51% of all issues related to this particular Government Ministry. Another 6% of calls received related to the services of First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies. This number has steadily increased over the past several years, from 20 calls in 2000 to 94 in 2007. Between the Ministry of Social Services and the First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, 57% of all of the issues received by the CAO in 2007 dealt with the provision of child welfare services in Saskatchewan.

Referrals for services provided by other ministries and agencies have remained fairly consistent over the years. Issues with services provided by the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing represent 10% of total calls received by the CAO.

This number is slightly higher than the 8% rate of 2006. Calls regarding the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing are predominantly in relation to concerns in young offender facilities around the province.

A smaller segment demonstrates a diversity of issues presented by callers to the Children's Advocate Office. In 2007, 5% of caller issues pertained to the Ministry of Justice and Attorney

Table 1: Relationship of Contact Person to Child or Group of Children



General, with custody and access constituting the largest portion. This was a significant decrease from 2006, when 12% of total calls to the CAO related to justice issues. Further, calls regarding the Ministry of Health in 2007 represented 2% of total CAO calls, and more than two-thirds of those enquires were about denial of coverage.

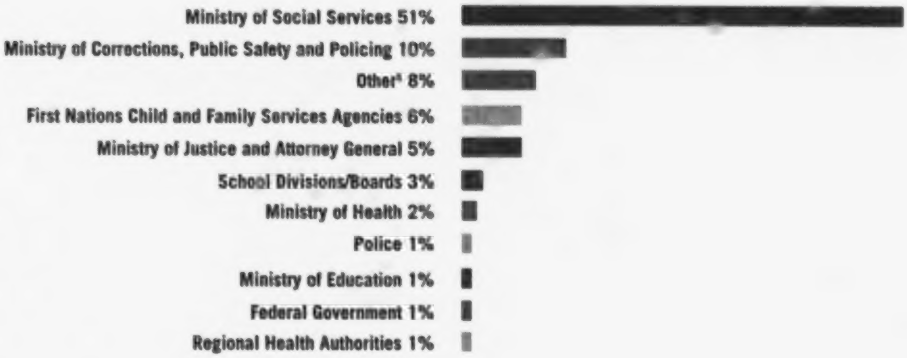
As in years past, issues regarding case management and case planning comprised the majority of calls received by the Children's Advocate Office. Specifically, these involved children and youth being denied the opportunity to participate in the planning process or the opportunity to hear why certain decisions were made concerning them and their case plan. Other issues included the disagreement of children and youth with a particular residential placement, their concerns regarding lack of stability due to multiple moves, and their perspective that the views of a parent and/or the Ministry of Social Services are given precedence over their own voice.

ADVOCACY

The Advocacy Process

A continuum of advocacy services is provided to the children, youth, parents and others who contact the Children's Advocate Office requesting assistance. On average, the CAO responds to 125 new calls per month. All enquires to the CAO are given a timely response, and calls from children and youth are given special priority. The Intake Advocate provides the first-line response to those making enquires or complaints to the CAO. Through interviews and gathering information, the Intake Advocate identifies relevant issues, determines if a complaint or enquiry falls within the jurisdiction of the CAO, and then initiates appropriate action. Self-advocacy services that provide information or clarification about government policies and procedures, as well as existing appeal mechanisms, may be offered to the caller. The caller may also be offered strategies to help resolve the matter him or herself.

Table 2: Concerns Raised with Children's Advocate Office - Listed by Government Ministry or Agency



If self-advocacy strategies do not appear to be effective, the Intake Advocate may undertake early advocacy intervention, which may include making initial calls and conducting preliminary negotiations with decision-makers. The next level in the advocacy process, if initial strategies are not sufficient, is the provision of advocacy intervention by an Advocate. Once a file has reached this level, intervention may involve face-to-face meetings with the child, youth, or others, as well as the facilitation of, and participation in, case conferences and meetings, and networking with multiple government ministries and organizations.

Non-jurisdictional Calls

In situations where the Intake Advocate determines that concerns are outside of the mandate of the Children's Advocate Office, information and self-advocacy strategies are provided to assist the caller in having his or her concerns addressed and, hopefully, resolved. Examples of issues over which the CAO has no jurisdiction are issues pertaining to custody and access, individual school boards, decisions of Courts and Justices of the Peace, and programs under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit.

Advocacy Themes and Emerging Issues

2007 was a year in which many historical issues continued to persist and new issues emerged for children and youth in Saskatchewan. Concerns over the management of child care files have continued to be raised. For example, where children or youth disagreed with their case plan, where they were not provided with an opportunity to participate in their case plan and decision-making process, or where no plan existed for children or youth. Many callers have continued to cite inadequate access to services as a major issue, including denial of certain medical treatments or medications prescribed by a physician, and also a lack of services to address the special needs and recreational and educational programming requirements of children and youth.

Of major concern is a persistent lack of commitment to a child-centred approach within the child welfare system and, specifically, to permanency planning for children and youth. Referrals are made regarding children who continue to reside in, or are returned to, the family home where significant risk of abuse and neglect exists. Children and youth often remain in care with temporary status, even beyond 24 months, when they are entitled to permanent status with the Provincial Government.

Numerous referrals are made regarding placement concerns in which the child or youth disagrees with his or her current placement or proposed placement, or cites concerns with the quality of the placement. The trend of continued and frequent changes in placement, and the prevalent lack of appropriate placement available to children and youth, place these children and youth at risk, even within the system that is designed to protect them. Of those children and youth who have secured a placement in the care or custody of the Provincial Government, far too many have contacted the Children's Advocate Office with issues related to authority personnel, including allegations that they had been mistreated by staff or had little meaningful contact with the professionals who were charged with their care, protection and well-being.

The following issues were identified in 2006 and continue to be referred to the CAO by children and youth, foster parents, parents, and professionals with disturbing frequency:

- Children and youth in receipt of child welfare services have had their interests ignored or minimized in the development of their case plans. The focus has been directed instead towards reintegration or reunification with family, which in many cases has placed their safety, stability and interests secondary to other interests.
- Children and youth have been left in the family home in high-risk situations for unacceptably long periods of time - where they have remained in possible risk situations of abuse or neglect - in an attempt to maintain the family unit. In addition, the lack of availability of childcare resources is seen to create situations in which children remain at risk in the family home, due to the fact that no placement was made available to them.

- Children and youth have been subjected to multiple changes in child welfare placements as they are moved from one resource to another, adding to their instability, lack of security, and capacity to form meaningful attachments with caregivers. This often results in a lack of permanent case planning for children and youth who have extended involvement with the child welfare system.
- Children and youth have continued to reside in group homes or stabilization and treatment centres for extended periods (beyond the intent and service mandate of the program) due to a lack of residential placements, which undermines their entitlement to permanency.
- Children and youth have been discouraged or prevented from accessing the services of the Children's Advocate Office by a variety of service providers.
- Children and youth have been denied access to alternative medications prescribed by licensed physicians due to budgetary decisions.
- Child welfare concerns have included non-compliance with best practice standards regarding appropriate assessment and intervention measures.[1]

2007 CASE STUDIES

Case Example 1: Individual Advocacy Service
Provider(s): Corrections, Public Safety, and Policing
Issue: A youth from a young offender facility contacted the Children's Advocate Office. He stated that staff members were threatened by the practice of his faith. As a result, the staff had confiscated his religious artifacts and prevented him from practicing his religion.

Background: The youth had a number of drawings and artifacts that did not pose a threat to anyone's safety; however, staff had advised him that it was inappropriate to practice this type of religion and refused to allow him to access any of his religious materials.

Actions: One staff member encouraged this youth to contact the Children's Advocate Office. An Advocate met with the youth and determined that the staff actions had violated his rights under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* A letter written to the director of the facility outlined concerns with the decision of staff not to allow this youth to practice his religion.

Outcome: After reviewing this situation, the director had all of the youth's possessions returned to him, and he was informed that he was allowed to practice his religion.

Case Example 2: Individual Advocacy Service
Provider(s): Department of Community Resources
Issue: The Children's Advocate Office was contacted regarding a proposed change of placement for a child who disagreed with the placement.

Background: The child had resided in the same foster home for three years and was opposed to the proposed change in placement that would see her reside with her siblings and an aunt. This child had been sexually assaulted by her siblings.

Actions: An Advocate met with the child to obtain her perspective. The child confirmed both her desire to remain in her current foster home and her fear of living with the siblings. She also expressed her view that she did not want any contact with her siblings, let alone to live with them. The Advocate reviewed the concerns and the opinion of the child with the child's social worker.

Outcome: The social worker advised the Advocate that the child would remain in her current foster home and that visits with her siblings would not take place unless she explicitly requested the visits.

Case Example 3: Individual Advocacy Service
Provider(s): Child and Youth Mental Health Services
Issue: An anonymous patient in a mental health ward contacted the Children's Advocate Office and expressed concerns about the treatment of another youth in the ward.

Background: A youth had been left shackled (hands and feet) in her room and did not have access to a telephone. The shackled youth had advised the anonymous caller that nurses had bound her so tightly she had difficulty breathing.

Actions: The Advocate met with the youth and confirmed that the restraint was extremely tight. It also became questionable as to why this youth was in the mental health ward in the first place. Staff on the ward indicated that they felt the ward was used as an emergency placement for children and youth by the Department of Community Resources. The Advocate then met with management at the Department of Community Resources and reviewed the situation, requesting that the youth be immediately removed from the ward.

Outcome: The Department of Community Resources acknowledged that this placement was inappropriate for the youth and, within a couple days, removed the youth from the ward into a foster home.

Case Example 4: Systemic Advocacy Service Provider(s): Group Home, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency

Issue: A group home contacted the Children's Advocate Office regarding concerns they had with the ongoing case planning for a youth.

Background: Group home staff assessed that the youth could be discharged from the group home if an appropriate placement was secured. While the youth was requesting a placement with her father, concerns were identified with the appropriateness and ability of either her mother or father to care for her.

Actions: The Advocate communicated these issues to the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, and the supervisor at that time confirmed that significant concerns existed with both parents. Consequently, neither parent would be considered as a placement resource for this youth. In addition, during a visit with extended family that had come forward as a potential placement for the youth, she was exposed to her grandfather who was under investigation for sexually abusing her. A restraining order was in place, and the family was advised that she was not to have contact with him.

The Advocate facilitated a case conference with the group home, the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, the parents, the extended family and the youth, at which time a variety of issues were raised about case planning and placement. It was apparent from comments made by the family that all of them denied that the accusations made by the youth were true and did not appear supportive of the healing requirements she would need after discharge. The Advocate reiterated the concern over any family member's ability to care for the youth.

As the father was unwilling to sign another Voluntary Agreement with the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, the Agency

Table 3: Number of Children and Youth in Direct and Delegated Care in Saskatchewan

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Children in direct care of the Provincial Ministry of Social Services	2939	2947	2798	2907	3053	3243
Children in delegated care of First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies	1042	1082	1133	1099	1123	1253
Total children in care	3981	4029	3931	4006	4176	4496

determined that it was safe for the youth to return to her father. When the Advocate attempted to contact the youth at her father's home to follow up, the Advocate was informed that the youth did not live with her father. The Advocate contacted the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency worker for the youth's new contact information, and the worker was unaware of the situation. It was later determined that the youth had left her father's care on the first day she was placed with him.

Outcome: It had been decided by the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency that it was in the youth's best interests to reside with her father. When this placement broke down, it was determined that the youth had lived with her mother all summer, unbeknownst to the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency. As a result, a risk assessment and home study were completed and it was determined that it was safe for the youth to live with her mother and the file was closed.

FIRST NATIONS ADVOCACY

While the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office is charged with serving all children and youth in the province, a disturbing trend has been identified in the course of the CAO's individual advocacy, and of service and program investigations. There appears, in many instances, to be a two-tiered approach to service delivery: one for non-aboriginal and First Nations children and youth residing off reserve; and a second, substandard level of services for First Nations children residing on reserve. It is important to acknowledge this unique challenge that influences the well-being of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal children and youth. The Children's Advocate Office's investigations into Oyate, in 2006, and the Four Directions Stabilization and Assessment Centre, in 2007, as well as its work with other on-reserve group homes, has revealed severe deficiencies in services provided to children and youth residing in those facilities. Deficiencies were found in recreation and educational programming, the training and qualifications of staff, and in programming and special-needs supports. Additional deficiencies included mistreatment by staff, lack of contact with family, restricted access to the CAO, lack of privacy between residents and Advocates, and sparse and inappropriate accommodations.

It is the position of the Children's Advocate Office that all children are entitled to an equal level of basic, universal human rights. Not only are these rights based on common sense, but they are also protected within the 1989 United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* The *Convention* was ratified by the Federal Government and supported by the Provincial Government in 1991. This basic and universal set of rights warrants that each child is entitled to survival and a reasonable standard of living; to develop to his or her fullest potential; to protection from harmful influences, abuse, and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural, and community life.

However, the *Convention* - and our promotion of universally accessible supports and services - have not translated into an equitable level of service to First Nations children living on reserve. This group of children continues to suffer harm or death and to receive a substandard level of support and services at a much higher rate, in contrast to the level of preventive, support, and protective services provided to First Nations children living off reserve or to non-aboriginal children. This dichotomy in services has been presented to the Children's Advocate Office in the form of numerous individual referrals and publicly reported investigations. Unfortunately, First Nations children on reserve have become the 'innocent casualties' of jurisdictional, political, and funding disputes between various branches of non-First Nations and First Nations governments.

This inequitable state of affairs for First Nations children can no longer be overlooked and it is paramount that the Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada guarantee that services provided to all First Nations children on reserve are, at minimum, equal to those provided to children off reserve and, ideally, are appropriate to the specific needs of First Nations children and the communities within which they reside.

The Children's Advocate Office hopes to see a new level of investment and commitment from Provincial and Federal Governments in the form of equitable and community-based solutions that will place *Children and Youth First* and at the centre of care, and that will put First Nations children living on reserve on a new road - one of hope, mutual respect, collective caring and reconciliation.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

In the course of advocating for individual children and youth, individual concerns may be identified as systemic in nature when the number of children and youth presenting specific concerns increases significantly, or when the type of concern relates to deficiencies in legislation, policy or practice. *Systemic issues* may be referred for systemic advocacy, review, or investigation. Issues identified for systemic advocacy in 2007 include the following:

- Access to justice (i.e., through independent legal representation in child welfare matters);
- Permanency planning (i.e., insufficient attention to child-centred planning that exceeds 24 months in care without an appropriate shift in status);
- Health services (i.e., access to appropriate medications and specialized medical support services); and
- Overcrowding in foster homes (i.e., exposure of children to safety and protection concerns and quality of care provided to children).

Access to justice

Through its review of individual advocacy and investigation files, it has been determined by the Children's Advocate Office that the views and best interests of children and youth are not being presented appropriately during child welfare proceedings. Consequently, the views and preferences of children and youth are not routinely considered in the judicial decision-making process.

Children and youth in general, and in particular those children and youth in child welfare proceedings, are considered to be one of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society. It is disturbing that Saskatchewan remains the lone province in Canada devoid of any specific authority in its child welfare legislation that confers upon a child or youth the right to participate in child welfare proceedings.

To address this current deficiency, the Children's Advocate Office-in cooperation with the Canadian Bar Association-is moving ahead with an interim plan, since children and youth in child protection proceedings currently have no status within the court process. A *pro bono* child and youth representation panel has been developed to empower children by attempting to provide them with a separate voice in decisions that will affect them for the rest of their lives. While the *pro bono* program is an interim measure, it functions to fill the gap until such time as the Government of Saskatchewan changes legislation and implements a permanent, supported program of legal representation for children and youth in appropriate cases.

Permanency planning

When a child has been removed from the family home due to protection concerns and is unable to return, due to the likelihood of exposure to further abuse and/or neglect, he or she is entitled to a permanent plan that provides for a safe, secure and caring home. Such a plan offers children and youth stability in order that they may develop to their fullest potential. However, the Children's Advocate Office has seen too many situations in which children and youth have been left in the family home in high-risk situations for unacceptably long periods of time, in an attempt to maintain the family unit. In addition, a lack of available childcare is seen to create situations in which children remain at risk in the family home because no placement was made available. Conversely, the CAO has also seen children repeatedly returned from care to live with their families, even though it has been demonstrated that their families still presented significant risk to the children's safety.

The 'revolving-door' sequence of children and youth coming into care and then being returned home creates a vicious cycle in which children and youth are exposed to multiple changes in child welfare placements. As children and youth are moved from one resource to another, the instability and lack of security and capacity reduces their ability to form meaningful attachments with caregivers.

Children and youth continue to reside in group homes and at stabilization and treatment centres for extended periods - beyond the intent and service mandate of the program; this is due to a lack of residential placements and undermines their entitlement to permanency. Further, policy states that when a child or youth is in care of the Ministry of Social Services or a First Nations Child and Family Services Agency for a cumulative period of 24 months, they are entitled to permanent status with the Provincial Government. Many referrals are received in which a child is not afforded this permanency and stability.

Health services

The number and frequency with which calls are received regarding medical issues have increased substantially within the Children's Advocate Office. The breadth of concerns, combined with the complex nature of health issues, has elevated the need for this to become an ongoing systemic issue within the CAO. Referrals concerning access to timely diagnosis and treatment of medical concerns are increasing, with families expressing their frustration about a health system plagued with long waiting lists. In some cases, lengthy waiting lists are cited as contributing directly to the risk of further medical conditions. Children and youth from northern communities experience this at a higher frequency than their southern counterparts.

Numerous calls are received regarding children whose medical diagnosis has included a prescription for medications not covered under the Saskatchewan Drug Formulary or Exceptional Drug Status. These are drugs prescribed by physicians and specialists when other forms of medications have proven to be unhelpful, ineffective, or have caused additional complications and negative side effects for the child or youth. As a result, families must pay for these medications, if they seek to maximize the quality of life for their child. Of great concern are the many instances in which foster families and other professional caregivers are choosing to pay for these medications out-of-pocket, while the Ministry of Social Services takes the position that the responsibility for such payment does not fall within its jurisdictional mandate. Children and youth have contacted the Children's Advocate Office and offered to spend their allowance on these prescriptions that offer them an enhanced quality of life.

Families with children and youth that have highly complex medical diagnoses and needs are finding that, while medical advances have allowed their children to survive childbirth, the community and home care supports and services that would maintain the care of their child at home are virtually non-existent. Alternatively, several families have contacted the Children's Advocate Office, citing instances in which their children have had to remain in hospital due to the lack of available home care during the night. Further concerns have been raised about the lack of training and consistency of home care workers and the resulting increased risk posed to children.

Overcrowding in foster homes

The Children's Advocate Office continues to receive concerns from professionals, children, youth and foster parents about overcrowding in foster homes. The issues which have concerned the CAO are as follows:

- The potential for violence in an overcrowded environment, both against the child and/or the foster parent;
- The mixing of age and gender of children and youth;
- The movement of children and youth between foster homes;
- The running of children and youth from foster placements, due to concern for their own safety;
- A lack of privacy and supervision within the foster home;
- The inadequacy of some living conditions, due to overcrowding;
- The existence of assessments that are not sufficiently completed prior to placement; and

- The use of Persons of Sufficient Interest (PSI) to manage the issue of overcrowding in foster homes.

B) INDIVIDUAL, GROUP AND SYSTEMIC INVESTIGATIONS

AUTHORITY

Under the authority of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act,* the Children's Advocate has the responsibility to "receive, review, and investigate" concerns regarding Provincial Government services to children.

The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act sets out the legislated authority to investigate issues concerning services for children by Provincial Government ministries or agencies. In this regard, the CAO believes children are entitled to an array of investigative options similar to adults. In December 2006, the CAO delineated five areas of investigation under its mandate in order to provide children and their natural advocates with a full continuum of investigative services:

TYPES OF INVESTIGATIONS

1. Child Death Investigations
2. Critical Injury Investigations
3. Fairness Investigations
4. Program and Service Investigations
5. Mandatory Investigations (subsequent to referral by a Committee of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Committee or Lieutenant-Governor in Council)

Regardless of the type of investigation undertaken, the fundamental purpose of the investigation is the same:

- to recommend changes in government practice, policy, or legislation that will prevent future harm to children;
- to improve the quality of services provided by child protection and other child-serving systems; and
- to promote greater public accountability.

All Children's Advocate Office investigations place the child or young person at the centre of the investigation.

In 2006, the CAO advised government and child-serving systems of its intention to adjust the criteria of child deaths to be referred for investigation in 2007. The most substantial change over this past year has been to revert back to reviewing those child deaths that occurred within 12 months of the child having been in care or in receipt of government services. The CAO further requested referrals on critical injuries that occurred within the same time frame.

This change in referral criteria was seen as necessary to meet the current "best practice" methodology, which is to investigate child deaths and critical injuries where services were being provided, at the time of the child's death or critical injury, or in the preceding 12 months. Although this change has increased the intake of cases that the CAO examines, it has served to restore value to the process.

Investigations can vary from single issue to multi-issue and can involve many systems. Multi-disciplinary investigations undertaken by the Children's Advocate Office are meant to analyze all relevant child-serving systems that have provided services to the child or young person in question. These investigations typically require access, review, and analysis of multiple files. Information from the Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, the Coroner's Office, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health (including hospitals, public health, mental health, and addictions services), City Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have been reviewed by the CAO.

The Children's Advocate Office has created a Multi-Disciplinary Advisory Team to provide professional analysis and expertise in the formulation of its recommendations. The team provides expert advice in the areas of pediatrics, forensic pathology, law enforcement, law, mental health, education and child welfare. The resulting recommendations are based on current best practices, expertise and knowledge.

Where preliminary findings and recommendations are made by the CAO, they are provided to the appropriate ministries or agencies, in writing, under section 21(3) of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*. Continued correspondence and dialogue occurs with the appropriate ministry or agency regarding the findings and recommendations, and the outcomes are reported in the CAO's Annual Reports under Recommendation Tracking.

Child Death Investigations

The Children's Advocate Office has been conducting independent Child Death Investigations since 1997, and this category of investigation continues to comprise the majority of investigations referred to and conducted by the CAO.

The Children's Advocate Office concluded 19 Child Death Investigations during 2007. Of these, 12 were completed with a multi-disciplinary investigation. Seven Child Death Investigations were closed under Section 18 of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*, which allows, at the discretion of the Children's Advocate, for the cessation of an investigation. The majority of these investigations related to the deaths of medically fragile children, of which an initial investigation indicated that the children had received the services to which they were entitled and had died a natural death.

Of the 19 Child Death Investigations closed in 2007, eleven of the children were male and eight were female. The Coroner's Branch classified 13 of these children's deaths as Natural, three as Accidental, two as Suicides and one as Undetermined.

Of the 19 children whose death investigations were closed in 2007: 15 were in the care of the Minister of Social Services or a First Nations Child and Family Services Agency; three were living with their biological families and receiving services from the Ministry of Social Services or from a First Nations Child and Family Services Agency; and one was under the authority of the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing at the time of death.

Recurring Themes

The Child Death Investigations that were closed in 2007 presented familiar themes: non-compliance with policy; a need for integrated case management; inadequate assessment and intervention; placement concerns; lack of information sharing; exposure to violence; quality of mental health services; and children born to substance-abusing mothers.

In its March 2005 *Summary of Child Death Reviews*, for the years 2000 and 2001, the Children's Advocate Office reported a number of concerns, issues and themes that have recurred over the years. They include the following:

1) Non-compliance with department and agency obligations under legislation and policy standards;
2) Inadequate risk and safety assessment, particularly at the initial investigation stage;
3) Inadequate intervention by overemphasizing family preservation and permitting children to remain in, or return to, at-risk environments in which ongoing protection concerns have not been addressed;
4) Inappropriate approval of placements and placing children in unsafe resources without adequately evaluating issues within the resource or the capacity of the caregiver to meet the child's specific needs;
5) Lack of integrated and coordinated case management, role clarification, and communication among service providers, leaving differing systems to operate "in silos"; and
6) Inadequate information management; identified problem areas relate to recording information, sharing information, accessing information and storing information.

In spite of these recurring areas of concern, it is also fair to say that the Children's Advocate Office has observed many community-based agencies and service providers throughout the province managing and supporting children and youth in a manner that consistently keeps their best interests and needs embedded in a *Children and Youth First* approach, when providing necessary care and service support.

Of the 12 children whose deaths were investigated through the multi-disciplinary format, it was found that services provided by the government ministries and agencies were not in compliance with existing policy in *eight* of the investigations. In some of the investigations, more than one ministry or agency was in non-compliance. In *four* of the investigations, services were found to meet or exceed the services to which the child was entitled. Only *two* of the investigations indicated a greater need for integrated case management. Both of these were suicides in which greater integration may have resulted in a different outcome. In the *three* investigations, where Mental Health Services were involved, there was a lack of resources for children with severe mental health issues. Assessment and intervention concerns were identified in *seven* of the 12 investigations involving either Social Services and/or Mental Health. *One* child died in relation to complications from violence, as he had come into care after suffering shaken-baby syndrome and died later due to his injuries. *Seven* of the children were clearly identified as being from families where exposure to family violence was an ongoing issue. *Five* of the 12 children were born to substance-abusing mothers.

Case Example 1 - Child Death Investigation: Jonathon *[7]

Jonathon was 17 when he died as a result of suicide through the ingestion of his prescribed medication. At the time, he was alone without appropriate supervision. As a young child, he was well known to both Mental Health and Social Services in his home area due to his increasingly difficult to manage behavioural and mental health issues. Jonathon was diagnosed with a Pervasive Developmental Disorder at the age of fourteen. Two years later, at the age of 16, his behaviour worsened and, as his parent felt he was not getting the assistance he needed from his home region, he was moved to another region and placed in a men's shelter. The Ministry of Social Services engaged with the young man and provided him with extensive support and assistance, but was unable to find an appropriate placement for him. Several placement options were tried, but each time the placement broke down due to Jonathon's mental health issues and extremely difficult behaviour. Jonathon was being treated by a psychiatrist at this time, who prescribed medications for his mental illness. Child and Youth Mental Health became involved in an assessment capacity, but did not have any residential resources or supports to offer Jonathon at that time. He eventually lived in an adult residential resource that did not have the capacity to provide supervision to a young person, nor were they able to monitor his medication. Ultimately, they were not equipped to provide the kind of safety and treatment that Jonathon needed. Further investigation by the Children's Advocate Office in 2007 indicated that there were still no resources in the province that would be able to manage Jonathon's special needs.

Social Services, while providing extensive services, did not have a residential resource for this young person, and the Mental Health community resources were inadequate. The Children's Advocate Office has recommended to both the local Health Region and the Ministry of Health that they provide more information on Pervasive Developmental Disorders to service providers, and increase residential resources to address the concerns of young people who are severely mentally ill.

Case Example 2 - Child Death Investigation: Valerie *[8]

15-year-old Valerie had involvement with several child-serving systems prior to her suicide. She was receiving counselling from a guidance counsellor at school, addictions and mental health counselling through the Health Region, and she had access to a psychiatrist in a larger centre. While there were many professionals working with Valerie, a Children's Advocate Investigation into this death indicated that there was no inter-agency sharing of information regarding her addictions issues and suicidal ideation.

The last child-serving system to become involved in her case was the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. A Child and Youth Worker had been assigned to complete a pre-sentence report for Valerie, during which time she learned that Valerie experienced suicidal ideation. The Child and Youth Worker made Valerie's mother aware of this and reported her concerns to the local Mental Health Authority. She then let Valerie know that the Mental Health Authority would be contacting her. Valerie seemed happy with this information, but that night, after a fight with her boyfriend, she killed herself.

Although mental health, addictions services, and the school guidance counsellor had long-term relationships with Valerie, none of them foresaw her suicide. While Mental Health had the recent referral from the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, they did not act on this referral in time. Each of these child-serving systems has since implemented policy and practices to lessen the possibility of such a tragedy in the future.

Critical Injury Investigations

Some children suffer severe maltreatment at the hands of their caregivers and survive with critical injuries and trauma. Subsequent to its involvement with the "Baby Andy" case[9], the Children's Advocate Office has undertaken a commitment to investigate the critical injuries of children who are injured while receiving services from the Ministry of Social Services or the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing within 12 months of receiving service. The Critical Injury Investigations are conducted in a multi-disciplinary manner. Many of the same themes are found in Critical Injury Investigations that parallel the themes found in Child Death Investigations. Two Critical Injury Investigations were closed through the CAO in 2007.

Critical Injury has been defined as, "where the injury necessitates a child's hospitalization and major medical treatment".[10] In addition, attempted suicides may result in a Critical Injury Investigation, regardless of whether hospitalization or major medical treatment was required. In total-and partly in response to the policy development and discussions with the Ministries of Social Services and Corrections, Public Safety and Policing - the Children's Advocate Office has received an additional 17 Critical Injury referrals (for a total of 13 in 2007). The CAO has prioritized Critical Injuries, given that the child may need additional Advocacy services. Several Critical Injuries are currently under investigation.

The following Critical Injury Investigations clearly demonstrate the tragic outcomes when children are not at the centre of child welfare practice, policy, and legislation. The lack of recognition that the child is the primary client and at the centre of any child welfare action may lead to confusion as to how to best serve the family. The outcome for each of these children is long-term physical and emotional trauma. Stories such as these have convinced the Children's Advocate Office that a plan for action is necessary to promote the CAO's *Children and Youth First* Principles, which recognize Saskatchewan children as rights holders at the centre of any service provided to them.

Case Example 3 - Critical Injury Investigation - Tyler*[11]

Tyler is a two-year-old boy who was beaten so badly by his father that he is now paralyzed on one side of his body. During the Children's Advocate Office's investigation into the services provided to Tyler and his family prior to his injuries it was found that, historically, Tyler was severely malnourished; his parents continually exposed him and his siblings to known sexual offenders; the children exhibited symptoms of sexual abuse; the health of the children was compromised by the condition of the home (human excrement smeared in more than 50 places, rotting food, molding clothes and excessive garbage found throughout the home); the children were often locked in the basement; abuse in the form of slapping and hitting was used on the children, including the infants; the parents had inappropriate age expectations of the children; and the parents refused support to learn new ways of parenting. Such a litany of abuse and neglect of children is shocking. However, equally shocking are the more than 40 documented referrals to the Ministry of Social Services over a 13-year time period. Despite Tyler's siblings being apprehended for brief periods of time, Tyler himself was never in care prior to his critical injury, and it was only after his injury that the remaining siblings were brought into care.

Following our investigation, we concluded that the Ministry of Social Services did not sufficiently consider the severe and extensive child protection history with all adults involved, including the multitude of referrals over the 13-year period during which the children remained at risk. The frequency, nature, and severity of the protection concerns, both reported to the Ministry of Social Services and identified by the caseworker, offer ample evidence that Tyler and his siblings were left in a high-risk living situation. The Ministry failed to protect these children from contact with perpetrators with long and substantiated histories of sexual abuse. Further, the Ministry was aware that the children were not receiving medical care, and did not intervene. The Ministry of Social Services did not undertake a child-centred philosophy in this case. This was family-centred care at all costs. It is the opinion of the Children's Advocate Office that the critical injury to Tyler was preventable, had the Ministry of Social Services provided Tyler with the child-centred protection services to which he was entitled.

Case Example 4 - Critical Injury Investigation: Jordyn *[12]

The prolonged beating and abuse of 6-year-old Jordyn by her mother, which was witnessed by the child's step-father, resulted in criminal charges being brought against the mother and in charges under *The Child and Family Services Act* against the step-father for failing to report a child in need of protection.

Based on errors that the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency had made when it originally placed Jordyn into care; that Agency's predicament of not having the authority to keep her in care; the mother's desire to have the child live with her; and there being no apparent reason to apprehend the child, a plan was undertaken by the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency to reunite Jordyn with her mother. The biological father was never contacted in regard to the case planning that was occurring.

The mother had several other children, who were not living with her, and a history with both the Ministry of Social Services and the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency. The Ministry of Social Services had active involvement with the mother, as she had recently given birth to an infant who was addicted to methadone. The Ministry of Social Services was supervising the mother's care of that infant.

As Jordyn was moving from a placement that was under the jurisdiction of the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency to her mother's home, which was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Services, the Provincial *Family-Centred Case Management Policy* dictated that the responsibility for supervision of the case be transferred to the Ministry of Social Services. Contrary to policy, the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency did not arrange to transfer the file, nor did it contact the Ministry of Social Services to advise Ministry staff that Jordyn would be moving to live with her mother. The First Nations Child and Family Services Agency closed its file four days after placing Jordyn with her mother, although it continued to follow up for one week. Less than one month later, Jordyn suffered severe abuse.

Prior to any abuse occurring, the Ministry of Social Services became aware of Jordyn being in her mother's home when the caseworker assigned to provide support to the family in relation to the mother's newest child made a home visit and discovered that Jordyn was there. The mother advised the Ministry of Social Services worker that the First Nations Child and Family Services worker would be contacting the Ministry of Social Services regarding Jordyn being placed with her. As noted earlier, the First Nations Child and Family Services worker did not contact the Ministry of Social Services, nor did the Ministry of Social Services worker contact the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency to inquire about the case plan.

The situation described illustrates a lack of information sharing and effective communication between the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency and the Ministry of Social Services. This lack of information exchange between the Ministry of Social Services and one First Nations Child and Family Services Agency was previously identified to have resulted in a catastrophic injury of a child in the Baby Andy Investigation. In July 2003, the "Baby Andy" report was released, regarding the investigation of an assault on a two-year-old child that resulted in his permanent disability.

In Jordyn's case, the First Nations Child and Family Services Agency did not notify or transfer the case to the Ministry of Social Services, as is required by policy. Consequently, conditions were created whereby Jordyn was exposed to violence. The outcome was that Jordyn was repeatedly assaulted by her mother. As a result, both Jordyn and her sister were taken into care.

Fairness Investigations

The Children's Advocate Office believes that just as adults have access to fairness investigations through the Ombudsman, children and young persons are entitled to the same right. As part of the Children's Advocate Office's expanded role in investigations, the CAO committed itself to undertaking Fairness Investigations in 2007. "Generally, a fairness matter will arise where the decision, action, or omission of government falls into one or more of the following categories: it is unreasonable; contrary to law; oppressive; improperly discriminatory; is based on a mistake of law or fact; or is wrong".[13]

Essentially, a "fair process" requires that:

1) the person affected is aware that a decision will be made;
2) the person affected is aware of the information that will be considered when the decision is made;
3) the person affected is given an opportunity to provide his or her own information and to challenge the information in the decision-maker's hands;
4) the decision-maker considers all relevant information and nothing irrelevant when making the decision;
5) the decision-maker is unbiased; and
6) the person is notified and provided with reasons for the decision. The requirements of a fair process are fluid and will depend on the nature, impact, and complexity of the decision.

Four fairness investigations were initiated by the Children's Advocate Office in 2007 and focused on the following areas:

The first fairness investigation involves an investigation into the actions of the Ministry of Social Services after a court had made a series of orders in respect of a sibling group of children. As a follow-up to the advocacy services that the Children's Advocate Office was providing to the children prior to the court orders, it was brought to the attention of the CAO that the Ministry of Social Services had not taken the steps stipulated by the Court to make permanent plans for the children.

The second fairness investigation is focused on the actions of the Ministry of Social Services in relation to its decision not to follow the assessment of the children's social worker and long-term ward review committee, which had recommended that the children be made permanent wards. The outcome of the court process to obtain permanent status for the children turned out to be a consent order, making the children indefinite Persons of Sufficient Interest.

The third fairness investigation is being conducted based on a complaint that the Ministry of Social Services did not conduct a fair and independent child protection investigation in response to complaints that had been made by one of the child's parents. The complainant alleged that the Ministry of Social Services did not conduct a proper investigation of the circumstances, and that the Ministry's decisions have resulted in this child remaining at risk of abuse.

The fourth fairness investigation is related to the Ministry of Social Services' administrative decision to refuse to cover the cost of medication prescribed by a medical specialist for a child in long-term care of the Ministry. The prescribed medication was not on the formulary or covered by

the exceptional drug status program. The investigation focuses on the Ministry of Social Services' legal responsibilities as a prudent parent to this child, in accordance with the *Children's Services Manual*, and the fairness of the Ministry of Social Services' actions regarding denial of that medical treatment.

Program and Service Investigations
Children's Advocate Office staff conduct program and service investigations to ensure that children and youth obtain the benefits to which they are entitled from Provincial Government Ministries and from delegated or government funded community-based agencies.

Concerns raised by children or youth, their families, professionals, or the community that involve services, which affect groups of children in some way, fall under the Children's Advocate's jurisdiction and are able to be investigated. The Children's Advocate may also initiate investigations on his own motion, or by referral from a committee of the Legislative Assembly or Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Over the past year, Program and Service Investigations were initiated to study the overcrowding of foster homes in the Centre Region of the Ministry of Social Services, as well as to determine the safety and acceptable levels of service provided to the children at the Four Directions Child and Family Services Inc. Stabilization and Assessment Centre. These investigations were still open as of December 31, 2007.

The goal of Program and Service Investigations is to have a positive impact on government legislation, policy and practice where the availability and quality of services provided to groups of children and youth is concerned.

Mandatory Investigations
Sections 12.61(1) and 12.61(3) of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act* empower a Committee of the Legislative Assembly, as well as the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to make referrals to the Children's Advocate for review, for investigation, and to report on matters affecting the interests and well-being of children. The Children's Advocate must carry out the request for review, investigation, and the subsequent report, as required by the *Act*, except in instances where the issues lie outside his jurisdiction.

In the *2006 Annual Report, Children and Youth First . . . The Right Focus*, the issue of mandatory investigation was raised as an area government should consider invoking, subject to appropriate negotiation of terms of reference and funding for the Children's Advocate Office. In 2007, there were no referrals from the Legislative Assembly or the Lieutenant Governor in Council. When assessing an issue, the CAO's independent perspective adds value by adding to the credibility of the outcomes and increasing the level of public confidence during the process.

C) PUBLIC EDUCATION

As part of its legislated mandate, the Children's Advocate Office engages in public education to raise awareness of the rights of children and youth and the role of the CAO throughout Saskatchewan. To meet its mandate, a variety of public education activities were undertaken in 2007.

NATIONAL CHILD DAY: NOVEMBER 20, 2007

18 Years of Paper Rights - Moving Towards the Reality of Lived Rights
On November 20, 2007, Canadians celebrated National Child Day in recognition of the adoption of the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of the Child* in 1959 and the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989. The Canadian Federal and Provincial Governments' ratification and support of the international instruments, which were formalized through the democratic process, validated the position that children occupy a special place in our communities, and that, as a society, we have a collective responsibility for their care and well-being.

The occasion of the *Convention* - and the first generation of youth covered by the *Convention* turning 18 - is an opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been made to protect their rights and promote their well-being. The measuring stick is whether the 'paper rights' espoused in the *Convention* have materialized into 'lived rights' for the children and youth of Canada, and, in particular, Saskatchewan.

While progress has taken place on commitments made by Canada and Saskatchewan, the evolution of tangible rights and entitlements, to a large extent, has been uneven. The promise of children being full rights-bearing citizens has generally been relegated to 'paper rights.' It is abundantly clear that inadequate changes have taken place in the political, economic, social and educational structures that impact children's lives.[14]

In 1994, Saskatchewan created an *Action Plan for Children*, which developed a number of programs and services to support and enhance the care and protection of our children. The Plan also established the Children's Advocate Office and, later, the excellent work of the non-partisan Committee on the Sexual Exploitation of Children. The Action Plan has since fallen by the wayside, and important issues affecting children that could have been reviewed and discussed at this table are no longer being addressed in the same way. Celebrated as a national award-winning achievement, the child-centred approach that was the driver behind the Plan must be reconstituted to ensure that the fundamental human rights of children and youth under the *Convention* are given sufficient priority and integrated within government legislation, policy and practice. The CAO's mandate is to complete the work that began in 1994 by taking the 'paper rights' of the *Convention* and making them 'lived rights' for Saskatchewan's children and youth.

In 2007, the Children's Advocate Office established a set of eight *Children and Youth First* Principles for Saskatchewan children and youth, which reflect those Articles of the *Convention* that the CAO found to be most relevant in its day-to-day advocacy and investigative work. The CAO has called upon the Provincial Government to adopt these same Principles with the hope of their anchoring a new *Children and Youth First* Action Plan. If the Premier were to put into operation a renewed Action Plan, based on these Principles, and fulfill Saskatchewan's obligations under the *Convention*, this would go a great distance towards transforming the 'paper rights' into actual 'lived rights.'

The *Convention* expressly recognizes that parents have the most important role in bringing up their children. Issues involving their children's rights are encouraged to be dealt with in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. As Senator Landon Pearson has stated, *"The standards set by the* Convention *should not be seen as entitlements that set the child against the adult world. On the contrary, they represent the highest norms of civilized behaviour."* [15]

At times, children and youth require the intervention of persons other than their parents to ensure their safety and well-being. Coincidently, the rights that children and youth are entitled to from their parents are the same as those required from their extended family, community, or government. The rights are universal. In this regard, the *Convention* specifies, and UNICEF articulates, "children everywhere have basic human rights: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in the family, cultural and social life."[16]

It is imperative for children and youth to have as many advocates as possible, be they natural, family, community, or statutory advocates. We encourage everyone - whether a parent, family member, teacher, caregiver, or professional - to become effective advocates for children and youth and to find practical ways in which to help them on a day-to-day basis.

It is the Children's Advocate Office's sincere hope that by National Child Day in 2008 - and for every day thereafter - we will see Saskatchewan taking the lead in moving beyond the 'rhetoric' of children's rights and making the *Convention* a 'reality' for all of Saskatchewan's children and youth.

YOUTH VOICE AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Saskatchewan Youth In Care and Custody Network

The importance and relevance of youth voice and engagement cannot be stressed enough. Article 12 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that young people should be free to voice their opinions and have a say in matters that affect them. In practice this appears simple, but in reality many organizations - particularly government organizations and agencies - struggle to have youth voice heard in a meaningful and respectful manner.

Historically, the Children's Advocate Office has worked with youth to develop strategies and opportunities to bring youth voice to the work of the CAO. Recently, the CAO has focused the energy of advocacy to create strong linkages with existing youth programs and organizations throughout the province and country. Examples include the National Youth in Care Network, CRU (Connections and Resources for U) Youth Wellness Centre at Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon, and Youth Launch-Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement.

As in past years, the goals for youth participation and engagement remain the same for the Children's Advocate Office: youth must say what they think, learn to become strong and effective self-advocates, participate in issues that affect them, and provide the opportunity for the Children's Advocate to learn from them.
The Children's Advocate Office continues its commitment to provide youth with the opportunity to participate in identifying issues and concerns that confront youth in, and from, care. This is accomplished through a partnership with the Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network.

The Saskatchewan Youth in Custody and Care Network is a not-for-profit organization that advocates for, and supports, youth between the ages of 14 and 24, who are in - or have resided in - the child-welfare or young-offender systems. The purpose of the organization is to assist youth who are in, and from, government care to have a voice in their lives and to provide consultation and advice to the Provincial Government in an effort to improve the programming and services provided to children and youth in government care. The Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network is a "for youth by youth" organization, and the Children's Advocate Office is privileged to participate with this organization by providing adult support for local networks, as well as support to the Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network Board of Directors as a sitting ex-officio member.

The Children's Advocate Office has enlisted representation from the Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network to sit as a member of its CAO Multi-Disciplinary Advisory Team. This Network provides a valuable experiential voice on Child Death and Critical Injury Investigations completed by the CAO's investigative team.

2007 NORTHERN EXCHANGE

The Northern Exchange is a collaborative initiative of three Offices - the Children's Advocate Office, the Provincial Ombudsman's Office, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. Its purpose is to travel to northern communities within Saskatchewan; provide an opportunity for ongoing dialogue with those communities by hearing their concerns about rights, fairness, equality and the availability of Provincial Government services; and, in the process, learn how each of these Offices might provide more effective and valuable services.

In June, as a continuation of earlier segments of the Northern Exchange, the three Offices had an opportunity to meet once again with various individuals and groups at the Hamlet of Stony Rapids. Representatives from each of the three Offices had the opportunity to discuss the roles, functions and mandates of their respective Offices, while community members expressed a variety of community-based concerns and provided valuable feedback.

As an extension of the Northern Exchange, a second trip took place in November to convene a conference at Buffalo Narrows called "Exchanging Ideas - Building Partnerships Conference - A Northern Exchange." Again, the Children's

Advocate Office, the Provincial Ombudsman's Office and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission were involved. The Northern Exchange Secretariat, which consisted of representatives from the three Offices, put much time and effort into planning and organizing this conference.

The purpose of the conference in Buffalo Narrows was for northern residents to have an opportunity to interact in a training workshop and to increase their knowledge of the three Offices that provide services to the public. In this regard, the residents of northern communities have consistently expressed the view that personal contact with the three Offices is highly valued at the community level, because it builds better and stronger relations with the general public at a grassroots level.

The Children's Advocate Office staff members take advantage of every opportunity to travel to various northern communities, since doing this enhances the work of advocacy by focusing on children and youth through direct interaction and public education. The Northern Exchange Secretariat is looking forward to planning for next year's Northern Exchange activities.

Another northern initiative that the Children's Advocate Office attends annually is the New North Justice Symposium held at Prince Albert. Attendance at this annual event proves to be extremely beneficial, as the symposium is well attended by northern residents. Its presence at the New North Justice Symposium provides the CAO with additional opportunities to set up an information display booth and to speak with participants on a one-to-one basis.

PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN NATIONS (FSIN)

During the course of the year, there was a steady strengthening of the relationship between the Children's Advocate Office and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Many meetings took place, and the CAO was pleased to attend the media conference in May 2007 announcing the establishment of the Saskatchewan First Nations Family and Community Institute.

On August 21st, 2007, the Children's Advocate, Marvin Bernstein, and Children's Advocate Office staff were invited by Vice-Chief Guy Lonechild of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to attend the Urban Community Barbeque held at Saskatoon Friendship Park. Mr. Bernstein accepted the invitation and delivered a speech on that occasion. After acknowledging the Children's Advocate's kind words, a gift of appreciation was presented by Vice-Chief Guy Lonechild to Mr. Bernstein. The CAO staff also attended the all-day event and answered questions at its display booth.

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF PROVINCIAL CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATES

The Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates (the Council) is an alliance of provincially appointed Children's Advocates from the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, as well as the Youth Services Section of the Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman and the Québec Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse [Commission for Human Rights and Youth Rights].

The Council member offices work to ensure that children and youth rights are respected and valued and that their interests and voice, regarding Provincial Government services, are heard. In addition, they engage in rights-based public education, work to resolve disputes and conduct independent reviews, and recommend improvements regarding programs for children. The Council's work is based on its commitment to uphold the rights proclaimed in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Although mandates differ provincially, Council members share a common commitment to further the voice, rights, and dignity of children and youth.

The Council sponsored a conference hosted by the Alberta Children's Advocate Office in Edmonton, from September 25 - 28, 2007. The Saskatchewan Children's Advocate and four CAO staff attended, along with 30 Advocates from eight provinces, and Linda Manser, Executive Director of the National Youth in Care Network.

Executive and Advocate meetings were held, which allowed for an inter-provincial collegial exchange of information, highlights and successes of the streams of Advocacy and Investigations from the various Offices. In addition, the gathering was an opportunity for relevant training for the Advocates on the following topics:

- *The use of psychotropic medications with children in Canada, particularly with "in care" populations* - keynote speaker Dr. Dick Meen, Clinical Director, Kinark Child and Family Services, Ontario;
- *Independent Legal Representation of Children and Youth in Child Welfare* - presenters Dena Moyal, Legal Director, Office of the Children's Lawyer, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario, and Jackie Stewart, Senior Manager, Legal Representation for Children and Youth, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Alberta; and
- *A Framework for Serving High Risk Youth* - presenter David Tunney, Senior Manager, Child Intervention Planning and Implementation Branch, Alberta Children's Services.

The group also participated in a facilitated discussion to identify issues, strategies and resource implications for the Council, led by David Oman of the Convergence Consulting Group.

Looking forward, the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office is proud to be hosting the 2009 Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates Conference, to be held September 21 - 24, 2009 in Saskatoon.

PRESENTATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

As part of its public education mandate, the Children's Advocate Office participates in a number of presentations and speaking engagements. In 2007, these included the following:

Conferences and Public Presentations

- 2007 Legislative Interns, Saskatchewan Legislature, Regina
- Family Law Seminar, National Judicial Institute, Victoria
- Mid-Winter Meeting, Canadian Bar Association, Saskatoon
- Children's Alliance, Pilot Butte
- Regina Children's Justice Centre, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Regina
- Civil Law and Public Law Divisions Continuing Legal Education Seminar, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Regina
- Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, Swift Current Chapter, Swift Current
- Abilities Network Meeting, Lac La Ronge Child and Family Services, La Ronge
- Bells of Hope Conference, NASHI and Communities for Children, Saskatoon
- Canadian Child Health Clinical Scientist Program Western Canadian Mini-Symposium, Saskatoon
- Passion for Action-Building on Strength and Innovative Changes in Child and Family Services, Prairie Child Welfare Consortium, Regina
- Foster Families Appreciation Banquet, Saskatchewan Foster Families Association, Prince Albert
- Quality of Care Coordinators, Ministry of Health, Saskatoon
- Provincial Core Training, Ministry of Social Services, Various Centres
- Pineview Youth Treatment Centre, Prince Albert Parkland Health Authority, Prince Albert

Post-Secondary Education

- College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
- Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, Saskatoon
- Faculty of Social Work, First Nations University, Prince Albert
- College of Arts and Sciences, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon

Child and Youth Residential Services

- Onion Lake Group Home, Onion Lake Child and Family Services, Onion Lake
- Prince Albert Therapeutic Group Home, Ministry of Social Services, Prince Albert

- Leading Thunderbird Lodge, Qu'Appelle Child and Family Services, Fort Qu'Appelle
- Red Willow, Ministry of Social Services, Saskatoon
- Montreal Lake Group Home, Montreal Lake Child and Family Services, Montreal Lake
- Sundance Group Home, Prince Albert
- Bethany Home, Saskatoon
- Kozun House, Prince Albert

Conferences and Events Attended

- Strategies for Success Workshop, FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
- Meeting with the Governor General of Canada, Ottawa
- North Northern Justice Symposium, Prince Albert
- Youth Treatment Centre announcement and unveiling by Project Hope, Prince Albert
- 1st Annual Youth Conference, La Ronge
- Restorative Justice Conference, Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, Prince Albert
- Chains and Links: Human Rights Activism Conference, Saskatoon
- Northern Exchange Conference, Buffalo Narrows

1 Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office, *2006 Annual Report, Children and Youth First...The Right Focus*, April 2007 at 28.

2 Includes parents, step-parents, alternate caregivers, persons of sufficient interest to the child and legal guardians.

3 Includes interested third parties, such as band representatives, babysitters, and neighbours. Also includes anonymous callers and those who choose not to identify themselves.

4 Includes general enquires whereby there is no specific complaint about a particular service provider.

5 Includes calls regarding courts of law, community based organizations, professional associations, calls from other provinces, and specific Children's Advocate Office enquires.

6 *Children's Services Policy and Procedures Manual*, Chapter 4, Section 4.7.

7 Jonathon is a pseudonym to protect the child's privacy rights; the death occurred in 2003 and the Children's Advocate Office Investigation was completed in 2007.

8 Valerie is a pseudonym to protect the child's privacy rights; the death occurred in 2004 and the Children's Advocate Office Investigation was completed in 2007.

9 "Baby Andy" was a 20 month old child who suffered critical, non-accidental injuries while receiving child welfare services from the Montreal Lake Child and Family Services Agency in 2002.

10 Children's Advocate Office Draft Investigation Policy.

11 Tyler is a pseudonym to protect the child's privacy rights; the injury occurred in 2004 and the Children's Advocate Office Investigation was completed in 2007.

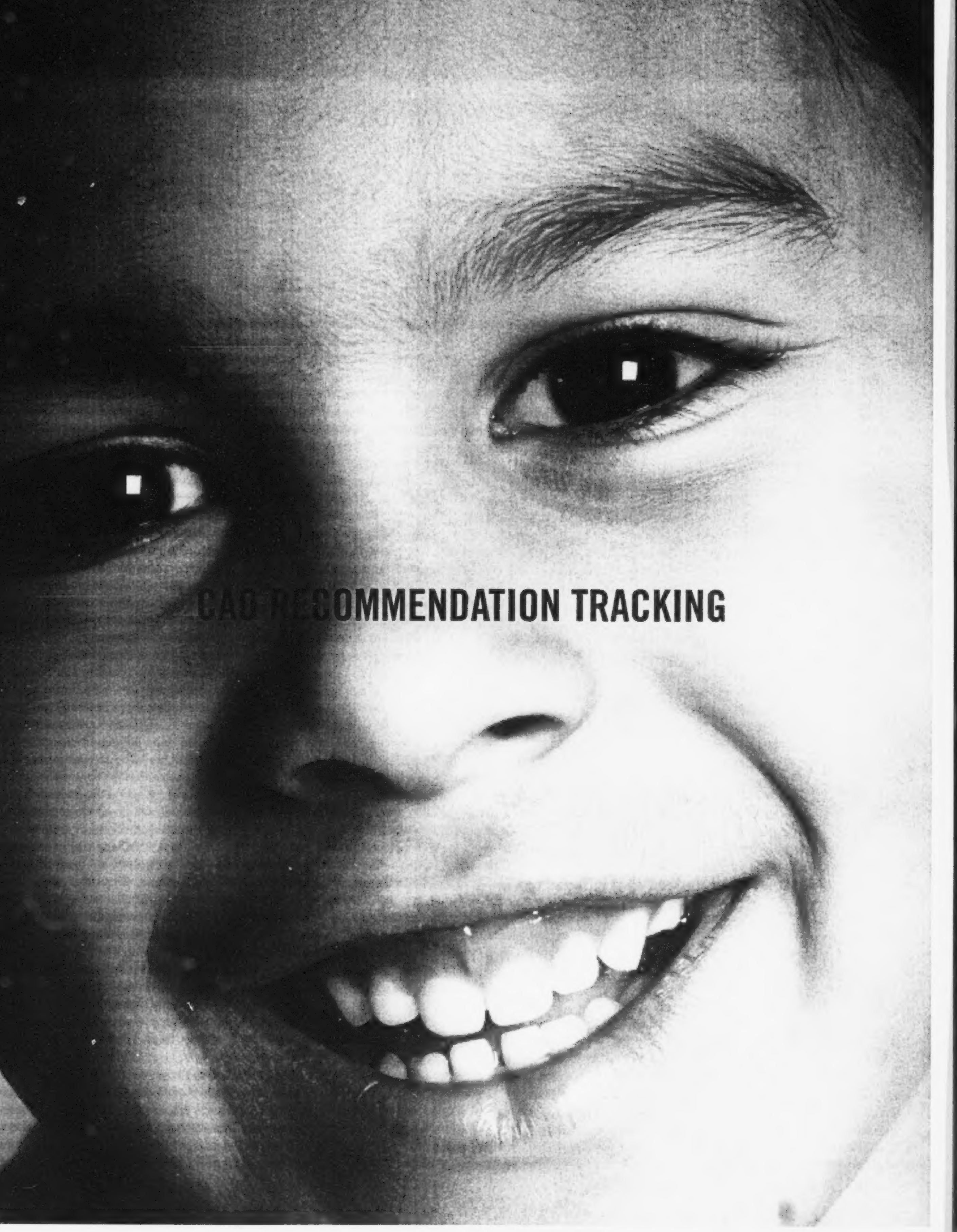
12 Jordyn is a pseudonym to protect the child's privacy rights; the injury occurred in 2004 and the Children's Advocate Office Investigation was completed in 2007.

13 *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*, R.S.S. 1978, as amended, c.0-4, s.24 (1).

14 A. McGillvary "Childhood in the Shadow of Parens Patriae" in H. Goelman et al., (eds.) *Multiple Lenses, Multiple Images: Perspectives on the Child Across Time, Space and Disciplines.* (University of Toronto Press, 2004) at 72.

15 R.B. Howe & K. Covell (Eds.), *Children's Rights in Canada: A question of Commitment* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2007) at x.

16 Available at www.unicef.org.



GAO RECOMMENDATION TRACKING

Nationally over the past few years, there have been a number of important lessons learned from the findings of investigations conducted in other provincial jurisdictions,[1] where recent child deaths have led to greater scrutiny of government actions. Recommendations put forward have called for comprehensive child death investigations. Further, there has been some prominence given to the importance of positioning Child Death Investigations within independent Children's Advocate Offices, in order to examine key service intervention points in the child's life and to make purposeful recommendations impacting government legislation, policy and practice.

To the credit of our province, Saskatchewan led the way when the Saskatchewan Government established the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office in 1994, appointing the Children's Advocate as an independent officer of the Legislature and mandating the CAO to investigate concerns regarding government services to children and to advise any Minister on any matter relating to the interests and well-being of children. It is the responsibility of the CAO to forward recommendations intended to improve the quality of government services to children; to track those recommendations; and to publicly report on the progress that the province is making towards acting upon those recommendations.

The Children's Advocate began formally tracking recommendations at the beginning of the term of the current Children's Advocate. At that time, all historical recommendations were reviewed to determine which ones continued to be relevant to the work of the CAO and consistent with future systemic initiatives. Since that time, 82 recommendations have been tracked and reported upon. Ten of these 82 recommendations were closed in the CAO's *2005 Annual Report*. The CAO is pleased to report on the remaining 72 Recommendations in this Annual Report. A detailed account of what actions have been taken can be found in the Children's Advocate Office Recommendations Progress Report immediately following this section. A summary analysis of these recommendations will be reviewed in this section.

In addition to the formal Recommendation Tracking process, the CAO corresponds with government and its various child serving ministries and agencies on matters of significant importance. This process is meant to encourage the government and its various ministries and agencies to proactively change policy and/or practice outcomes, where such outcomes will have a positive and lasting effect on the best interests, health, well-being and participation rights of Saskatchewan children and youth.

Of the 72 recommendations[2] tracked during this reporting period:

- 54% (39) were forwarded to the Ministry of Social Services (formerly Department of Community Resources);
- 25% (18) were forwarded to the Ministry of Health (formerly Saskatchewan Health);

- 7% (5) were forwarded to a Health Authority;
- 6% (4) were forwarded to the Ministry of Education (formerly Saskatchewan Learning);
- 6% (4) were forwarded to the Government of Saskatchewan;
- 4% (3) were forwarded to the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing (formerly Corrections and Public Safety);
- 4% (3) were forwarded to the Interdepartmental Steering Committee; and
- 3% (2) were forwarded to a School Division;
- 1% (1) was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General (formerly Saskatchewan Justice).

Recommendations provided to the Provincial Government are tracked and monitored by the Children's Advocate Office to determine the actions that government takes to address the recommendation. Recommendation tracking actions cease when the Children's Advocate exercises his discretion to do so. This discretion is based on the Children's Advocate determining that:

- adequate action has been taken;
- the Ministry has advised that the recommendation is "not accepted," and the Children's Advocate concludes that no further benefit will be achieved by continuing to advocate for its acceptance; or
- the Children's Advocate chooses to discontinue the recommendation, after considering the response provided by the Ministry.

Forty-nine of the 72 recommendations in this report have been closed to date. The Children's Advocate Office has considered that adequate action was taken on 41 (84%) of the 49 recommendations; 5 (10%) were discontinued; and 3 (6%) were not accepted. The closure rate of recommendations forwarded to each Ministry is as follows:

- Ministry of Social Services – 21 (54%) of the 39 recommendations have been closed, 20 of which had adequate action taken and one was discontinued by the Children's Advocate Office[3].
- Ministry of Health – 15 (83%) of the 18 recommendations have been closed, 7 of which had adequate action taken, 3 of which were not accepted[4], and 4 of which were discontinued[5].
- Health Authorities – 3 (60%) of the 5 recommendations have been closed, all of which had adequate action taken.
- Ministry of Education – 2 (50%) of the 4 recommendations have been closed, both of which had adequate action taken.
- Government of Saskatchewan – 4 (100%) of the 4 recommendations have been closed, all of which had adequate action taken.
- Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing – 2 (67%) of the 3 recommendations have been closed, both of which had adequate action taken.
- Interdepartmental Steering Committee – 2 (67%) of the 3 recommendations have been closed, all of which had adequate action taken.
- School Divisions – 2 (100%) of the 2 recommendations have been closed, both of which had adequate action taken.
- Ministry of Justice and Attorney General – 0 (0%) of 1 recommendation was closed.

The goals of Children's Advocate Office recommendations are to:

1) influence and effect positive changes to legislation, policy and practice;
2) promote improvements to the quality of government services provided to Saskatchewan children, youth and their families by advancing children's rights;
3) promote public and professional education;
4) identify areas that require further review; and
5) promote public accountability.

More than one identified goal may exist per recommendation. Forty-one of the 72 recommendations included in this report have been closed, as adequate action was taken, with the following measured outcomes:

- 2 resulted in a Legislative change or amendment (5%);
- 17 resulted in a Policy change or amendment (42%);
- 11 resulted in a Practice change (27%);
- 2 resulted in Children's Rights being recognized (5%);

- 8 resulted in Education being provided (20%); and
- 24 resulted in a Service Review (59%).

The Children's Advocate Office considers that reporting the specific actions taken by government relating to each recommendation "promotes public accountability." As such, at the time of closure, each recommendation that has been publicly reported reflects a measured outcome of "promoted public accountability." Not only does Recommendation Tracking hold government accountable with regard to what work needs to be done, it also reflects back to government the positive gains that have been made to improve child-serving systems for Saskatchewan children. While lessons are being learned in other jurisdictions about the importance of conducting independent investigations in order to make purposeful and effective recommendations impacting government legislation, policy and practice in order to improve services to children, Saskatchewan has already established this process and is well on the way to developing a clear track record of what is being done to improve our province for Saskatchewan children and youth.

AGGREGATE DATA 2005 - 2007

The aggregate data from the Recommendation Tracking initiatives of the Children's Advocate Office demonstrates that this independent Office is influencing provincial legislation, policy and practice; promoting the recognition of children's rights; and identifying areas of review for the Provincial Government to improve services to children. These reviews have resulted in internal recommendations that each Ministry has forwarded for its own service enhancement.

Government continues to be slow to respond. While 51 of the 82 recommendations have been closed with adequate action taken, that represents a mere 62% of all recommendations tracked by the CAO since 2005. A more thorough analysis reveals that many of the "core" recommendations related to real systemic change, central to the best interests, health, well-being and participation rights of children and youth in this province, remain dormant. That is, while the government has responded and complied with many of the CAO Recommendations 'quantitatively', albeit with only moderate success, nevertheless 'qualitatively', it has not demonstrated adequate action taken in any measurable way. For example, as we look at the recommendations forwarded by the Children's Advocate Office, we see that the value of the *Children and Youth First* Principles advanced in our *2006 Annual Report* remain untouched.

As we review the 72 recommendations included in this reporting period forwarded to eight different areas of the Provincial Government, we find that the majority of these recommendations would not have been necessary, if a set of *Children and Youth First* Principles had been not only endorsed, but also implemented and adhered to by the Provincial Government. While the recommendations we have forwarded have been addressed to the Provincial Government, some have been in response to

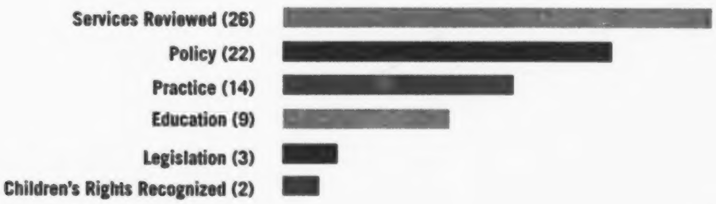


Table 4: Measurable outcomes resulting from the Children's Advocate Office Recommendations, 2005–2008

investigations into services delivered by 18 First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, which are ultimately legally responsible to the Provincial Government by virtue of their delegated authority agreements. It is our further conclusion that immediate clarification is needed at a provincial level to ensure that all government ministries and agencies that provide delegated services on behalf of government are rooted in the same principles governing their work.

At the conclusion of this annual reporting year, we once again encourage the Government of Saskatchewan to take the next step in the *Children and Youth First* Action Plan, by endorsing and implementing the *Children and Youth First* Principles in all areas of public policy, legislative development and daily practice relating to children and youth. We believe that a guiding framework, such as this, is essential to ensure the actualization of the fundamental right of children and youth to have their best interests, health, well-being and participation rights given primary consideration in all decisions affecting them.

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration. (Article 3:1, United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child - endorsed by the Saskatchewan Government, December 11, 1991).*

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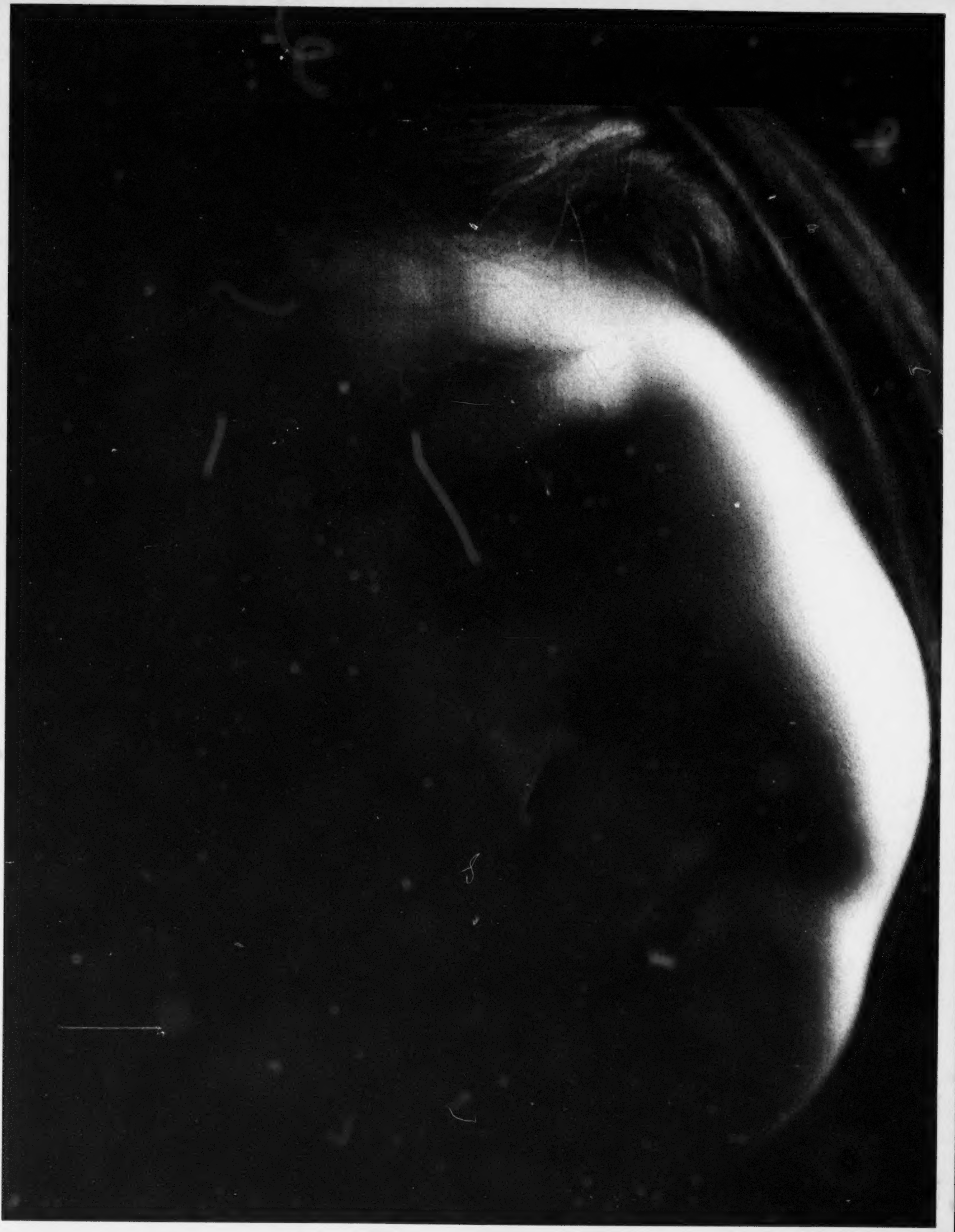
1 See Hughes, Ted, *B.C. Children and Youth Review: An Independent Review of B.C.'s Child Protection System*, (April 7, 2006); and Schibler, B., Hardy, M. and Hamilton, I., *Strengthen the Commitment – An External Review of the [Manitoba] Child Welfare System*, (Winnipeg: September 29, 2006).

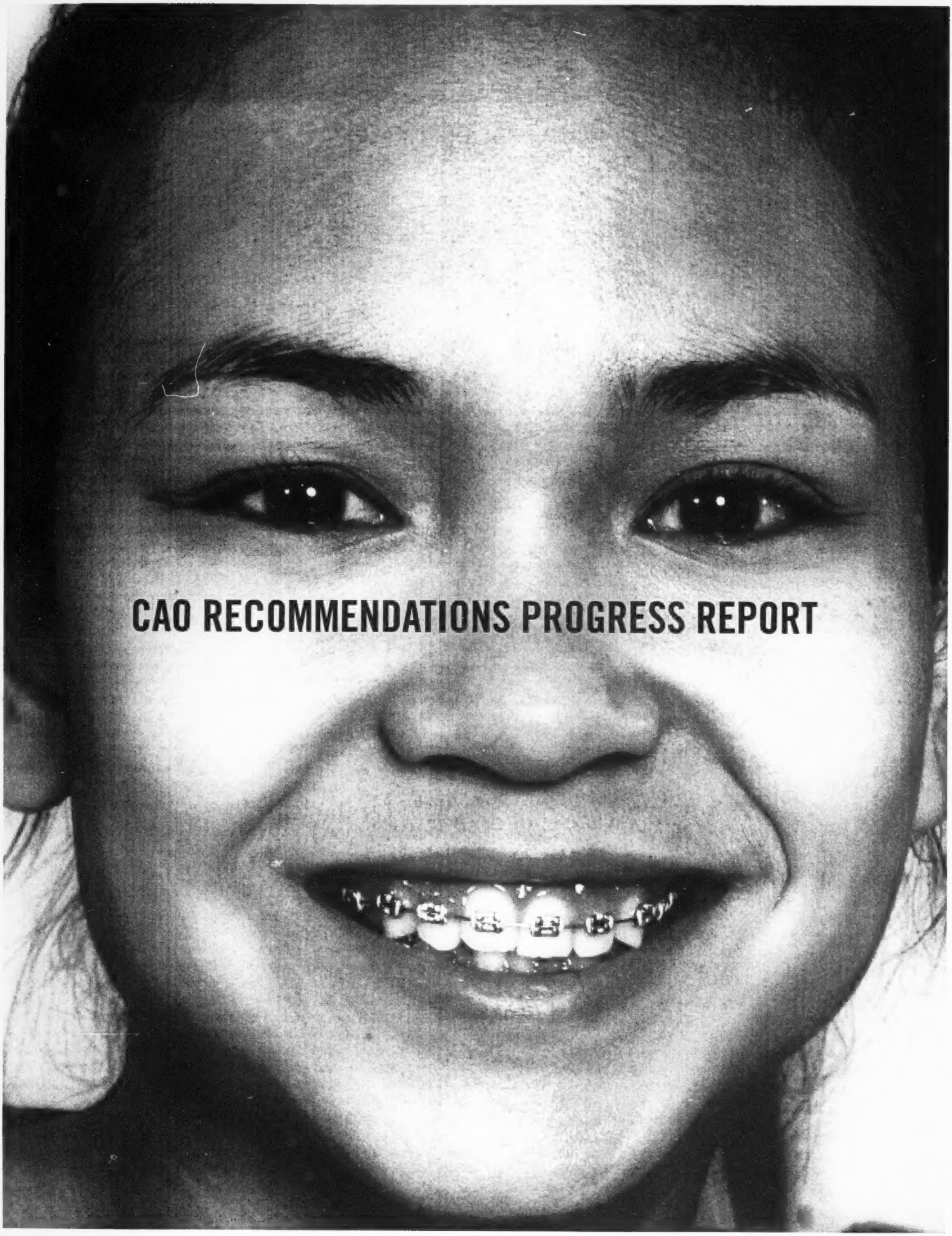
2 7 of the 72 recommendations were forwarded to more than one Ministry. As such, these statistics reflect the frequency by which each Ministry was named or included in each recommendation.

3 CDR.42(99,00) was discontinued and replaced by a systemic recommendation SYS.20(06) forwarded in the *Beyond 'At Risk' Systemic Report* (September 2006).

4 SYS.27(06), SYS.28(06), and SYS.31(06) were closed, but noting that the recommendation was not accepted.

5 SYS.29(06), SYS.30(06), SYS.32(06), SYS.38(06) were discontinued.





CAO RECOMMENDATIONS PROGRESS REPORT

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES)

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
CDR.33(97) That the Department of Community Resources and Employment (formerly known as the Department of Social Services) provide all foster parents with training and support to assist them in caring for children with special needs resulting from Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and that this training becomes mandatory.	The Ministry of Social Services advised that they are implementing their new Parenting Resources Information Development Education curriculum training province wide. The training will include information regarding the implications of prenatal exposure to alcohol and other drugs for parenting young children. In the interim, Social Services staff are providing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder training to foster families caring for children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Support is also offered to foster families by connecting them to the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder network of Saskatchewan, or through sponsoring them to attend a conference or workshop pertaining to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Additionally, the Ministry has implemented a Foster Parent Preference Questionnaire to evaluate their capacity to care for children with special needs, including children with FASD.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive the Parenting Resources Information Development Education Module 10 curriculum and training plan as recommended.
CDR.49(99,01) was forwarded to more than one Ministry, please see the Ministry of Education section.		
CDR.64(00) That the Department of Community Resources and Employment clarify with the (Provincial Child Welfare Department) the process to be used to ensure that written information regarding children in need of protection is shared in an appropriate and timely manner.	The Department of Community Resources and Employment advised that the National Directors of Child Welfare have approved revisions to the protocol: Children and Families Moving Between Provinces and Territories. Saskatchewan is currently waiting for all provinces and territories to sign the revised protocol. Saskatchewan is the lead on this initiative and has approved the revised protocol.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive the updated Inter-Provincial Protocol as recommended.

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
CDR.78 (06) That the Department of Community Resources make the necessary policy amendments to define the contact standards for Persons of Sufficient Interest, and other extended family and kinship care arrangements.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the department is currently reviewing the Alternate Care and Persons of Sufficient Interest policy to ensure it fully addresses the safety and well being of children placed with extended family. A Provincial Policy Committee has recently recommended changes to ensure contact standards are in place for Alternate Care and Persons of Sufficient Interest situations. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Regional Managers for Child and Family Services early in December 2006 for discussion and approval. The Department of Community Resources will ensure that the Children's Advocate Office is updated on this process and advised of any changes to either the policy regarding Alternate Care, or the policy regarding Persons of Sufficient Interest.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive policy amendments as recommended.
06-10840 That the Minister of Community Resources introduce proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* enabling children to obtain full status as a party in child welfare proceedings.	The Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General assembled a committee that reviewed the issue of access to justice and invited the Children's Advocate to make a presentation. There has been no announcement from government regarding the outcome of the committee's deliberations on the issue. The Children's Advocate Office received a letter from the Deputy Minister of Social Services in April 2008 responding to the same access to justice recommendations which were made in the context of a fairness investigation. The Deputy Minister indicated that a wide scale legislative review of both *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Adoption Act* would commence in 2008-2009. The matter of independent legal counsel for children in child welfare proceedings will be included in stakeholder discussions.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* enabling children to obtain full status as a party in child welfare proceedings.
06-10841 That the Minister of Community Resources introduce proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* authorizing judges at all Court levels in Saskatchewan to appoint independent legal representation for children in child welfare proceedings.	As above.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* authorizing judges at all Court levels in Saskatchewan to appoint independent legal representation for children in child welfare proceedings.
06-10842 That the Minister of Community Resources introduce proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* setting out prescribed criteria by which a Court will determine whether a child requires independent legal representation in child welfare proceedings.	As above.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* setting out prescribed criteria by which a Court will determine whether a child requires independent legal representation in child welfare proceedings.

Recommendation	**Action Taken**	**Action Required**
06-10844 That the Ministers of Community Resources and Justice, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, develop, fund and implement a legal program, with sufficient training and administrative oversight, that would provide children with access to independent legal representation in child welfare proceedings.	As above.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive confirmation that a program of legal representation for children in child welfare proceedings has been operationalized.
06-10847 That the Department of Community Resources Regina Region direct staff in the Intake and Investigative functions to assess child protection allegations received in the context of a custody/access dispute.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the Region would be holding training on the themes of the Child Death Reviews for the region specifically and the province more broadly. Included in this training would be the discussion of the child death that was the catalyst for the recommendation. The training will involve all child protection staff.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive confirmation that training has occurred.
06-10848 That the Department of Community Resources provide training to regional staff on the complexities of investigating and assessing child protection referrals that also have custody and access involvement.	The Department of Community Resources advised that there would be a reinforcement of custody and access issues in the training, and that within the Family-Centred Services Policy and Procedures Manual, enhancements are being made to provide increased clarity and details with respect to custody and access complaints.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive confirmation that enhanced training has been provided and that the policy manual has been made.
SYS.18(06) That the Department of Community Resources develop a new child-focused definition of permanency planning that is neutrally stated and consistent with the best interests of children, having regard to the following elements: a) An integrated system of review procedures; b) A full range of preventive and in-home services; c) Case management and case planning that are culturally appropriate; d) Strategies to minimize the length of time that a child will live in a setting that lacks the promise of being permanent; e) The full spectrum of permanency planning including placing the child with biological parents, relatives, permanent foster parents, adoptive parents, or foster/ prospective adoptive parents; f) Active collaboration among key community agencies; and g) Active participation of the family, child and the community in planning.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the "department recognizes that permanency is fundamental to building successful outcomes for all children." Further, the Department of Community Resources advised that they "began an on-going review of permanency planning in June 2006 and is now working with regional staff to identify barriers to permanency...[and that] the issue of permanency for children and youth involved in the child welfare system has been an issue for all jurisdictions across Canada. Nationally, the Directors of Child Welfare have identified this issue as one of their Strategic Trajectories. Provincially, the department recognizes the need to improve outcomes for children and youth through the timely achievement of permanency." The Department of Community Resources advised that permanency planning strategy is currently under development.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive a new child-focused definition of permanency planning that includes the noted subsections of the recommendation.

Recommendation	**Action Taken**	**Action Required**
SYS.19(06) That the Department of Community resources develop an action plan regarding permanency planning, having regard the following requirements: a) That the action plan recognize the need for thorough and timely assessments, which identify both the risk to the child and the existing parenting capacity; b) That this comprehensive assessment lead to inclusive, intensive, and timely intervention and permanency planning; c) That this action plan be applied across all cases involving child protection issues, including those of sexual exploitation; d) That the planning be based on the actual situation of the child, including her/his personal, family and social situation; and e) That the Department of Community Resources report its progress to the Children's Advocate by December 31, 2006, for inclusion in the Children's Advocate Office Annual Report and provide a copy of its definition and final action plan on permanency planning as soon as is practicable.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the department began an ongoing review of permanency planning in June 2006, and is working with regional staff to identify barriers to permanency. The Department of Community Resources initially advised the CAO that a review of permanency planning would commence in June 2006 with the goal of finalizing a permanency planning strategy by the Fall of 2007.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive an action plan regarding permanency planning, having regard to the subsections of the recommendation.
SYS.20(06) (formally CDR.42(99,00) featured in the *2005 Annual Report*) a) That the Department of Community Resources undertake to regularly identify and review, at a management level (i.e. beyond the supervisory level), those cases where children are repeatedly subjected to neglect or abuse over a significant period of time and where the Department of Community Resources has received repeated referrals of child protection issues; b) That this review be intended to ensure that interventions are "as complete and as intensive as necessary, reflecting the best interests and well-being of the child, to bring about needed change to reduce and ensure the ongoing protection and safety of the child"; and c) That this review be conducted in the context of a permanency plan for the child that includes the elements outlined in Recommendation SYS.18(06).	There has been confirmation from the Department of Community Resources that this recommendation has now been accepted. The Department of Community Resources struck a working committee to review the existing policies, procedures and practice regarding the department's current case review processes. The Children's Advocate Office was advised that they would be consulted again with respect to the findings and recommendations of this report to ensure that the spirit and intent of this recommendation has been met.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive a plan from the Ministry of Social Services Resources to meet the criteria noted in the recommendation. Note: The Children's Advocate Office featured this recommendation in the *2005 Annual Report*. The recommendation had not been accepted at that time.

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
SYS.22(06) a) That the definition of "child" in section 2(1)(d) of *The Child and Family Services Act* be amended for, among other reasons, consistency with the definition of "child" as set out in both Saskatchewan's *The Age of Majority Act* and Article 1 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; and b) That the Department of Community Resources report its progress to the Children's Advocate regarding Recommendations SYS.21(06) and SYS.22(06) by December 31, 2006, for inclusion in the Children's Advocate Office Annual Report and prepare the legislative amendments as soon as is practicable.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the department is committed to a full legislative review. This entails broad consultation and detailed analysis. The Advocate's recommendations will be considered in the context of this review.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* as recommended.
SYS.23(06) a) That proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* be introduced by the Minister of Community Resources to codify a list of guiding principles, which can be used at all decision-making points under the legislation, with the most important principle being "the paramount purpose of the Act shall be to promote the best interests, protection, safety and well-being of children"; b) That proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* be introduced by the Minister of Community Resources to codify a list of service delivery principles with the common objective of reinforcing the government's obligations to provide services in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner; that reflect the need for active participation and planning by aboriginal communities in respect of aboriginal families and children; and that optimize maximum participation and representation for both children and their families; and c) That further proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* be introduced by the Minister of Community Resources to codify the rights and entitlements of children in the care of the	The Department of Community Resources advised that the department is committed to a full legislative review with the following time line: • 2007 - 2008 - development of a comprehensive Policy Framework to guide the legislative review. • 2008 2009 - Extensive consultations will begin. The Children's Advocate's recommendations will be considered in the context of this process.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive proposed amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act* containing the various elements, as recommended.

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
Department of Community Resources. This may be in the form of a Preamble, Declaration of Principles, or preferably, a new Part of *The Child and Family Services Act*, ideally incorporating the principles set out in the United Nations *Convention of the Rights of the Child.*		
SYS.24(06) a) That the Department of Community Resources provide a more prominent child focus to its family-centered policy manual (i.e. Family Centered Services Policy and Procedures Manual), and incorporate the phrase, "child focused, family-centred and culturally sensitive", in order to achieve the right balance among these various considerations; b)That the Department of Community Resources give paramount consideration to promoting the child's best interests in accordance with Article 3(1) of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the child welfare legislation in most other provincial jurisdictions; and c) That the Department of Community Resources report its progress on Recommendations SYS.23(06) and SYS.24(06) to the Children's Advocate by December 31, 2006, for inclusion in the Children's Advocate Office Annual Report and prepare the legislative amendments as soon as is practicable.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the legislative review process will necessitate a review of all related policies and procedures, and any legislative changes will be supported by accompanying changes in policies. The current Family-Centered Service Policy and Procedures Manual will be reviewed as part of the legislative review process.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive amendments to the Family Centered Services Policy and Procedures Manual addressing the subsections of this recommendation.
SYS.25(06): a) That section 11(a)(iii) of *The Child and Family Services Act* be amended to make it easier to establish that a commercially sexually exploited child is a child in need of protection by using the language of 'sexual exploitation'; b) That the amendment eliminate the use of the stereotypical language of 'youth prostitution' and the mandatory requirement of linking the sexual harm back to the action or omission of a child's parent or caregiver as the activating casual circumstances;	The Department of Community Resources advised that "stereotypic language" to describe commercial sexual exploitation is not appropriate when providing services for sexually exploited child or youth. The term prostitution is used in *The Child and Family Services Act* to describe actions referenced under the *Criminal Code*. The intent of section 11(a)(iii) is not to label, stigmatize or denigrate a sexually exploited child or youth, but to ensure that they are viewed as being in need of protection and that they are provided with the required services. The Children's Advocate Office has been advised that the Interdepartmental Steering Committee has recommended that changes to the legislation be considered following, and in conjunction with, the broad legislative review presently underway.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive confirmation of amendments to Section 11(a)(iii) of *The Child and Family Services Act* as recommended.

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
c) That such an amendment provide that a child be found to be in need of protection 'if the child has been, of is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by another person and if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child; and d) That such an amendment also set out definitions for both 'sexual abuse' and 'sexual exploitation'.	Proposed timelines are as follows: 2007 - 08 - External Consultations 2008 - 09 - Legislative Amendments 2008 - 09 - Implementation In addition to legislative amendments recommended by the Children's Advocate Office, the Department of Community Resources is reviewing and amending departmental training to change the practice of workers to better ensure that sexually exploited children and youth are assessed to be children in need of protection with interventions conducted accordingly. The Department of Community Resources, through the Interdepartmental Steering Committee, is developing a public campaign with respect to the sexual exploitation of children and youth and how the community can assist in helping these vulnerable children and youth.	
SYS.26(06): a) That the Department of Community Resources conduct a mandatory training program to educate current and new department employees, agents, services providers and community based organizations of the Department of Community Resources, who participate in the delivery of services to sexually exploited children regarding the victimization of these children; b) That the goal of changing attitudes and responses to these child victims be the focus of this training by eliminating the terms 'working', 'prostituting' and other derogatory terms used to describe sexually exploited children who are victims of adult perpetrators; c) That the training include instruction concerning appropriate recording techniques and language for current and new department employees, agents, service providers and community based organizations of the Department of Community Resources, who participate in the delivery of services to sexually exploited children, having regard to case recording best practice; and d) That the Department of Community Resources report its progress to the Children's Advocate regarding Recommendations SYS.25(06) and SYS.26(06) by December 31, 2006, for inclusion in the Children's Advocate Office Annual Report and prepare the legislative amendments as soon as practicable.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the department provides mandatory training to all new staff which includes training about sexually exploited children and youth. The Department of Community Resources personnel, and staff from First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, policing agencies, Community Based Organizations and other community groups are provided training about the Provincial Strategy and issues affecting sexually exploited children and youth. The department agrees that training is vitally important to helping professionals. At the same time, it is important to provide information regarding the issues of sexually exploited children and youth to the wider community. On November 14, 2006, the province announced that $150,000 was allocated to develop a public education campaign aimed at the prevention of sexual exploitation. The Department of Community Resources, through the Interdepartmental Steering Committee, will actively participate in this important work. The Department of Community Resources advises that they have undertaken a review of their current training curriculum and has made and continues to make the necessary changes.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive an updated training curriculum including the above noted elements, a training strategy, and proposed legislative amendments.

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURES)

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
CDR.31(97,99) That the Department of Social Services include a section on medical care and drug administration (including both prescription and non-prescription drugs) in the pre-service training provided to foster parents.	The Department of Community Resources and Employment provided the Children's Advocate Office with a copy of its new caregiver-training curriculum and a training schedule to ensure that all foster parents (active and new homes) will receive training regarding medical care and drug administration as recommended.	• Education provided • Promoted public accountability
CDR.42(99,00) That Department of Community Resources and Employment undertake to regularly identify and review, at a management level, those cases where children are repeatedly subjected to neglect over a significant period of time and where Department of Community Resources and Employment has frequently re-opened child protection files. This review would be intended to ensure that interventions are "as complete and as intensive as necessary...to bring about needed change to reduce risks and ensure the protection of the child" (Department of Community Resources Policy).		**CDR.42(99,00)** has been discontinued and replaced by a systemic recommendation, **SYS.20(06),** forwarded in the *Beyond 'At Risk' Systemic Report* (September 2006). • Promoted public accountability
CDR.68(01) That when children are placed with extended family (or significant other persons) as a result of a child protection concern, children must be provided with the same level of safety, through appropriate assessments, planning and support systems, as children in other out-of-home placements.	The Department of Community Resources provided the Children's Advocate Office with a copy of their updated policy added to the Family-Centred Services Policy and Procedures Manual, fulfilling the intent of this recommendation	• Services reviewed • Policy changed • Promoted public accountability
CDR.69(00) That the Department of Community Resources and Employment's audit and review of services being provided to children placed in Approved Private Service Homes in relation to the policy standards outlined in the Children's Services Manual, be provided to the Children's Advocate Office by March 1, 2005.	The Department of Community Resources provided the Children's Advocate Office with a copy of their audit and review of services being provided to children placed in Approved Private Service Homes in relation to the policy standards outlined in the Children's Services Manual, as recommended. The Department of Community Resources committed to: - discontinuing the practice of placing children in Approved Private Service Homes; - using foster homes as an exclusive resource for children in the care of the Minister; - maintaining responsibility for case management of children in the care of the Minister.	• Policy change • Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	**Action Taken**	**Outcome**
	Every child, in care of the Minister, will be provided service as outlined in the Children's Services Manual regardless of approval of any exceptional placement arrangement. The Department of Community Resources' *Review of Children Placed in Approved Private Service* Homes forwarded six recommendations to further improve services.	
CDR.75(00) That the Department of Community Resources and Employment develop a policy regarding file reconstruction in situations where files are lost.	The Department of Community Resources forwarded the Children's Advocate Office a copy of new *Reconstruction of Child and Family Services Files* policy as recommended.	• Policy changed • Promoted public accountability
CDR.79(06) That the Department of Community Resources provide the review completed by the Centre Region of the Child Protection Intake process and forward a summary of the improvements made to the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office.	The Department of Community Resources initiated a review of the Child Protection Intake Process and provided the review to the Children's Advocate Office as recommended.	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability
CDR.80(06) That the Department of Community Resources and Saskatchewan Health explore the feasibility of implementing a province-wide alert system where a child may be deemed in need of protection at birth.	The Department of Community Resources and Saskatchewan Health reviewed the feasibility of implementing a province-wide alert system where a child may be deemed in need of protection at birth, as recommended. Further, the Department of Community Resources advised that they have developed a Provincial Working Group that is currently developing ways to improve their internal provincial alert system to enhance their ability to notify staff to urgent or high risk safety concerns. The Department of Community Resources advised that Saskatchewan Health professionals have been "most cooperative" in responding to the Department of Community Resources concerns and are aware of their obligation to report concerns pursuant to *The Child and Family Services Act*. As active partners in the Provincial Child Abuse Protocol, the Department of Community Resources and Saskatchewan Health worked cooperatively to develop agreements regarding information sharing, child abuse investigations and joint case management at the local level.	• Practice changed • Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that while the Department of Community Resources and Saskatchewan Health have determined that a province-wide alert system is not practicable at this time, each system exceeded the Children's Advocate Office recommendation by developing an internal alert system as a means to communicate these alerts within their respective regions.
CDR.81(06) That the Department of Community Resources ensures that caregivers have adequate levels of skills and training to care for children born to substance abusing women.	The Department of Community Resources implemented their new PRIDE (Parenting Resources Information Development Education) curriculum training province-wide. This training will include a Module entitled, "*Understanding the Implications of Prenatal AOD [Alcohol and Drug] Exposure for Parenting Young Children*", as recommended.	• Education provided • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
CDR.82(06) That the Department of Community Resources document on the [named] foster home file that should the foster parents re-apply to foster, that their capacity for caring for infants be reviewed and that they be provided with the information that the only recommended sleeping position for infants is on their back.	The Department of Community Resources confirmed that the documentation was placed on the [named] foster home file as referenced in the recommendation.	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability
CDR.83(06) That the Department of Community Resources send mail out to all foster parents of the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) booklet, produced by the Saskatchewan Institute on Prevention of Handicaps to ensure that foster parents have the information that it is important to always place babies on their backs to sleep.	The Department of Community Resources advised that they mailed the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) booklet to all foster families and First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies for distribution, as recommended.	• Education provided • Promoted public accountability
CDR.84(06) That the Department of Community Resources forward a summary of the improvements made subsequent to the Regina Regional Review of resources available to deal with children with complex needs.	The Department of Community Resources forwarded a summary of improvements made subsequent to the Regina Regional Review, as referenced and recommended. These improvements included: - Reorganization of two resource units to focus on resource recruitment, resource support, specialized services and more focused support for family-based resources. - Emergency receiving capacity reorganization to increase spaces for sexually exploited females from six to nine and boys decreasing from nine to six. - Transitional capacity in the regional resource continuum enhancement by working towards reopening the Oyate Transitional Program. - Two new programs to address the complex of adolescent families. - Existing service improvements to "enhance processes that are already in existence or underway."	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability
07-11570 That the Department of Community Resources develop policy to make it mandatory that children not be exposed to second hand smoke in foster care, requiring all foster parents to provide smoke free environments.	The Ministry of Social Services created new policy in 2007 and confirmed this fact in a mail out to foster parents in January 2008, as recommended. The policy requires foster parents to provide smoke free environments for foster children.	• Policy changed • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
SYS.06(06) - SYS.14(06) All nine (9) recommendations forwarded in the *Oyate Investigative Report* (September 2006)	The Ministry of Social Services and the Oyate Board provided final policy to meet the intent of all the Children's Advocate Office recommendations set forth in the *Oyate Investigative Report* (September 2006), with the exception of the Children's Advocate Office recommendation that "Department of Community Resources and Oyate sign a new service agreement that...[includes the] involvement of ... experiential youth on the Board of the Safe House".	• Services reviewed • Policy changed • Promoted public accountability Note: with respect to the area of technical non-compliance, File Hills Tribal Council amended its governance policy as of September 2007, to allow for the appointment of an experiential youth to the Oyate Board, but that the Oyate Board required six months, as of that September 2007 date, to find and appoint an appropriate candidate. The Children's Advocate Office concluded that the actions met the spirit of this particular recommendation and met the intent of our recommendations, subject to the caveat regarding the Children's Advocate Office recommendation that the Board include the membership of an experiential youth [to be implemented by March 2008].

MINISTRY OF HEALTH (FORMERLY, SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH)

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
CDR.49(99,01) was forwarded to more than one Ministry, please see the Ministry of Education section.		
07-11754 That Saskatchewan Health clarify the services provided to children and youth with Asperger's Syndrome and undertake to notify all service providers of expectations.	Saskatchewan Health provided the Children's Advocate Office with a summary of services available regarding Asperger's Syndrome including a list of additional resources for Autism intervention, treatment and supports initiated since 2007.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive clarification of services provided for children with Asperger's Syndrome and confirmation that clarification of services has been forwarded to all service providers.
06-11755 That Saskatchewan Health expand and enhance the supervised residential resources for children and youth in need of "intensive specialized mental health treatment".	Saskatchewan Health acknowledged that there are a small number of children who may require more intensive specialist residential mental health treatment. Saskatchewan Health has committed to an inter-departmental effort to identify the numbers and characteristics of these high-needs/high-risk children and youth, supports they received, what worked and what did not, as well as what is recommended in best practice literature. Saskatchewan Health will provide the Children's Advocate Office with an action plan by September 1, 2009.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive confirmation that supervised residential resources for children and youth in need of "intensive specialized mental health treatment" have been created.

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - MINISTRY OF HEALTH (FORMERLY, SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH)

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
CDR.36(98) That a review of the need for a residential psychiatric facility for children and youth in Saskatchewan be completed.	Saskatchewan Health conducted a review as recommended. This review included stakeholder consultations and resulted in a plan for a therapeutic family-based residential service for youth with mental disorders who cannot live at home in the Moose Jaw, Battleford and Prince Albert areas. Their review identified that there are a small group of children and youth with severe chronic mental and behavioural disorders who require more specialized treatment and care than was currently available. In response to this, a plan was developed to evaluate the implementation and impact of the new health initiatives, to identify any needs/gaps in service and work with the regional health authorities and other departments and sectors to address any needs/gaps in service.	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that this proactive response exceeded the initial Children's Advocate Office recommendation.
CDR.80(06) was forwarded to more than one Ministry, please see the Ministry of Social Services section.		
REV.08(04) That Saskatchewan Health, in consultation with stakeholders, develop and implement a comprehensive plan to ensure that mental health services are provided to Saskatchewan children, youth and families in a manner that is consistent with what is known about best practices.	Saskatchewan Health has developed a plan for children's mental health services in consultation with stakeholders. Saskatchewan Health's financial investment into the implementation of this plan involving children's mental health services in health regions is an increase to $14.5M by 2007-08 and $15M (annualized) in 2008-09, from $6.5M in the early 1990s. Saskatchewan Health advised that initiatives under this plan include: • A booklet on youth depression and suicide • A brochure about the children's mental health services plan • Positions to be filled such as a PhD Psychologist, three Masters of Social Work/ Psychology positions for family-based therapeutic residential services for youth with mental disorders, a Bachelor of Social Work position to provide children's mental health services, one Child Psychiatrist position, Psychology and the Social Work positions, a provincial Competency Training Co-ordinator position and 3.5 Social Work positions for the Early Psychosis Intervention Program. Mental Health outreach and respite services have been enhanced in a number of areas including: • Regina Autism Resource Centre • The Parent Mentoring Program • The Early Skills Development Program Note: the Children's Advocate Office understands that the additional funds provided ($.5M in 2007-08 and $1M in 2008-09) for the plan will allow for the following initiatives: • A Child Psychiatrist and a Social Worker in Prince Albert to provide distance mental health specialist consultation to that region and Northern Saskatchewan;	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
	• Seven outreach workers in Prince Albert, Yorkton, Regina, Saskatoon, the Battlefords, La Ronge and Beauval to provide mental health outreach services to improve access for Aboriginal children, youth and their families. Finally, the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Saskatchewan has completed a feasibility study on children's mental health services client outcomes to identify common outcome indicators that can be used across health regions. These indicators will be considered for use in a pilot study to measure client outcomes.	
SYS.27(06) That an explicit statement be provided of the underlying purposes(s) of this *[YDDSA] Act* in a Preamble, or alternatively a Statement of Purpose provision, stipulating that: a) the intent of this *Act* is to balance the need of young persons for protection and safety where they may be at risk of serious harm with their entitlement to have all of their fundamental human rights, as set out in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and their right to procedural fairness respected at all times; b) this *Act* shall be treated as having a health-related and not a criminal law focus; c) more intrusive measures shall only be used where less intrusive ones would be insufficient; and d) any period of involuntary detention shall be limited to the shortest appropriate period of time.	Saskatchewan Health advised that there is no intention to add the recommended Preamble or Statement of Purpose to the *Act*, as it was seen to be unnecessary, given the view that the legislation is health and not justice related. Further, Saskatchewan Health advised that the legislation contained no offence section; that clinical protocols are in place that direct physicians to develop a least intrusive measure approach for the shortest period of time; and that community supports are being put into place to prevent some youth from being re-apprehended.	**SYS.27(06)** has been closed noting that it was not accepted. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate remains of the view that it is incumbent upon the Province of Saskatchewan to ensure that its legislation meets the standard of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. A Preamble or Statement of Purpose provision would specifically identify and define the intention of this legislation focusing on the protection and rights of children at all stages of intervention, with the use of involuntary detention as the option of last resort. This would ensure that children's rights will be protected throughout the entire process.
SYS.28(06) That all young persons who are apprehended pursuant to this *[YDDSA] Act*, be provided with legal counsel at the point of apprehension, rather than at the completion of the assessment process, at no cost to the young person or family, and with sufficient information as to that right without delay.	Saskatchewan Health advised that with respect to SYS.28(06) and SYS.29(06), the Official Representative will be appointed post-apprehension and that this appointment is viewed as sufficient protection to ensure that the rights of those apprehended are protected.	**SYS.28(06)** has been closed noting that it was not accepted. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate remains of the view that the provision of legal services to young persons in the traditional sense would be preferable as would having the *Act* clearly state that the Official Representative is to be legal counsel.

Recommendation	**Action Taken**	**Outcome**
SYS.29(06) That all persons, who are subject to this *[YDDSA] Act*, be automatically informed of their right to access legal counsel, the Official Representative and the Children's Advocate without first having to request such information.	Legal Aid advised that "legal services" to young persons apprehended under this statute are not on the menu of services that they are able to provide. Hence, young persons will not be able to access legal services through Legal Aid. Furthermore, while the Official Representatives will be lawyers, the traditional solicitor-client relationship will not exist between the Official Representative and an apprehended youth. A young person will have access to, and will receive advice at no cost from legal counsel, albeit acting in the capacity of an Official Representative. The regulations state that the Official Representative is to contact the youth as soon as possible on receiving notification that a youth has been made subject to a community order or a detoxification order. In addition, the young person is to be advised of his or her rights under the *Act*. The fact that the Official Representative is a lawyer will tend to mean that, in at least some respect, the young person will obtain advice from a lawyer. Saskatchewan Health has developed a brochure which will be provided to each young person which will provide information as to the services of the Children's Advocate Office.	**SYS.29 (06)** has been discontinued. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate remains of the view that the brochure provided to each youth does not satisfy SYS.29 (06) regarding access to the services of the Children's Advocate Office as recommended.
SYS.30(06) That all young persons, who are subject to this *[YDDSA] Act*, be given automatic access to the warrant, so that they will have full and fair written disclosure of the grounds for the apprehension, without being subject to an "onus reversal" and first having to request such information.	Saskatchewan Health advised regulations require that all youth will be informed of the reasons for the apprehension where a youth is apprehended pursuant to a warrant. Amendments to the *Act* provide that where information is laid before a Judge of the Provincial Court, the youth is entitled to have access to the information and any other documents filed with the court, on request. Children's Advocate Office Comments: The Children's Advocate understands that while the legislation suggests that the information used to secure a warrant is to be provided "upon request," the response provided by Saskatchewan Health indicates that any and all information that was part of the judicial process will be provided to the young person, as a matter of course, rather than on request. In this case, the Children's Advocate is satisfied that the "practice" will go beyond the legislative requirement.	**SYS.30 (06)** has been discontinued. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate remains concerned that the legislation and responses received to date are silent with respect to those circumstances where the young person is apprehended by a police officer. It seems reasonable that the youth, if apprehended by means of this process, is also entitled, without request, to the information that led to the apprehension by the police. The Advocate remains hopeful that the commitment to provide the young person with the information used to apprehend him or her, by means of the judicial process, applies equally to those circumstances where the youth is apprehended by the police.
SYS.31(06) That all post-apprehension hearings occur automatically, with the Government assuming the onus of proof throughout, rather than there being an "onus reversal" imposed upon all young persons, who are subject to this *[YDDSA] Act* and who may be in crisis in some diminished capacity.	Saskatchewan Health advised that under the regulations, youth are informed of their right to appeal and be put into contact with the Official Representative who can assist the youth with preparing an appeal if the youth chooses to do so. Further responses indicated that it is not necessary to implement this recommendation, as the processes that have been put into place were modeled after legislation that is user friendly, accessible and responsive to the needs of young persons.	**SYS.31(06)** has been closed as not accepted. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that while there is a right of appeal to a review panel, which must be requested by a young person, there is no right to a post-apprehension hearing within a prescribed

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
		period of time with the onus of proof being borne by government. This, in the opinion of the Children's Advocate, creates a process that is irreparably prejudiced against the young person in favour of the government and is contrary to the principles of natural justice.
SYS.32(06) That all young persons, who are subject to this *Act*, be given the right to participate in any process or processes, which may result in decisions being made about them under this *[YDDSA] Act.*	Saskatchewan Health advised that youth are informed of their rights under the legislation by being put in contact with an Official Representative at the time of the assessment. This is consistent with mental health legislation in that clients do not participate in the initial application before the court. Further, the wording of Section 18.1 will enable the youth or parent to obtain the information and all other documents that are filed with the court and which are used for the purposes of obtaining the warrant. While this step occurs post-apprehension, it will give the youth and a parent an opportunity to see what information was placed before the court and which led to the apprehension.	**SYS.32(06)** has been discontinued. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that young persons have a right to participate in any procedure or decision-making process being used regarding them. In particular, Article 12(1) of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* provides that "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." This *Act* provides for no voice or participation for young persons until the review panel is convened and, at this time, they are not allowed to challenge the legitimacy of the originating apprehension. As well, subsequent to apprehension, there is no opportunity for the young person to respond to allegations before a Judge.
SYS.33(06) That all young persons, who are subject to this *[YDDSA] Act*, be provided with a youth worker immediately upon detention, and that the qualifications and duties of that position be defined, so as to include training and experience in both addictions counselling and in acting as case manager with the capacity to coordinate a broad range of services on behalf of those young persons impacted by the *Act.*	Saskatchewan Health advised that a "youth worker" as defined in *The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act* refers to a class of approved applicants, not necessarily the case manager who would be providing services to the youth. The program protocols provide for Health Region Addictions Counsellors to collaborate with physicians and other health care and service professionals, to establish service options contained in the community. Health Region Addictions Counsellors provide a case management function with respect to Community Orders and endeavour to see the youth within one (1) working day of receiving notice from the physician. Health Region Addictions Counsellors provide follow up services to youth discharged from a Youth Secure Detoxification Facility on a voluntary basis. In addition, amendments to Section 12.1 of *The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act* will provide that a treatment plan be developed if possible. It is the intent that all youth admitted into the Secure Youth Detoxification Centre would be assigned a caseworker within his or her home community.	• Legislation changed • Practice changed • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
SYS.34(06) That a mandatory child protection assessment be completed to protect the safety of all young persons in those circumstances where they are subject to a community order pursuant to this *[YDDSA] Act*.	Saskatchewan Health advised that an assessment of the youth's family and living situation is part of the comprehensive Adolescent Motivational Assessment Process conducted by the Health Region Alcohol and Drug Services. This action addresses the spirit and intent of the recommendation, as those workers would be bound by the provisions of *The Child and Family Services Act* to report where they have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection.	• Practice changed • Promoted public accountability
SYS.35(06) That concerns raised by Saskatchewan's Information and Privacy Commissioner, as outlined in his Special Report to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly on March 22, 2006, be addressed.	Saskatchewan Health advised that amendments to *The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act* were in response to the concerns raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner and satisfy the spirit and intent of this recommendation.	• Legislation changed • Promoted public accountability
SYS.36(06) That there be a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of this *[YDDSA] Act* upon a statistically representative sample of all young persons, who are subject to this *Act*, and that this information be provided to the Children's Advocate Office on a regular basis.	Saskatchewan Health evaluated this program and provided a copy of the evaluation to this Office. Further, Saskatchewan Health advised that this program will continue to be evaluated on an ongoing basis and that quarterly reports will be provided to our Office.	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability
SYS.37(06) That all young persons, who are subject to this *[YDDSA] Act*, be protected from being prosecuted for non-compliance with orders made under this *Act*.	Saskatchewan Health advised that prosecution for a breach of this *Act* is not available, as this *Act* does not contain an offence section.	• Promoted public accountability
SYS.38(06) That the Special Report be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services for further consideration to ensure fairness and respect for the principles of natural justice; and, that the rights of children and young persons of this province are respected and protected.	Saskatchewan Health advised that the Standing Committee on Human Services reviewed the legislation prior to it being put in place.	**SYS.38(06)** has been discontinued. • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that this recommendation was intended to provide the Standing Committee on Human Services with a further opportunity to reconsider the legislation. It was the Advocate's hope that the committee would recommend amendments to the legislation to incorporate some, if not all, of his concerns as previously noted in correspondence from the Children's Advocate Office.

HEALTH AUTHORITIES

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS - SASKATOON HEALTH REGION

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
CDR.49(99,01) was forwarded to more than one Ministry, please see the Ministry of Education section.		
07-11796 That Saskatoon Regional Health Authority provide mental health services for children and youth, which includes a supervised residential resource for children and youth in need of "intensive specialized mental health treatment".	The Saskatoon Regional Health Authority advised that they will work with the Department of Community Resources to develop residential services with intensive mental health treatment. The Saskatoon Regional Health Authority advised that they are not mandated to provide residential services.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive confirmation that supervised residential resources for children and youth in need of "intensive specialized mental health treatment" are created.

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - KEEWATIN YATTHÉ REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
CDR.70(99) That the Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority and Saskatoon Regional Health Authority advise all health professionals that each incident where they believe that a child is in need of protection, needs to be reported to an officer or peace officer pursuant to *The Child and Family Services Act.* **CDR.71(99)** That the Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority and Saskatoon Regional Health Authority advise all health professionals of the Department of Community Resources and Employment's appeal process and that it is available to them if child protection concerns persist despite referrals for intervention.	Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority agreed to: • Conduct orientations with new physicians with information regarding Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect and the appeal process before beginning to practice. • Provide all new employees with information regarding Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect and the appeal process at the general orientation held monthly, including it in the monthly newsletter, and including this information on the site orientation checklist for nurses. • Have Senior Management review draft policies and procedures dealing with reporting of child abuse/neglect. • Have eleven staff attend a Telehealth Session (1 of 3) offered by the Saskatoon Health Region on Child Protection Legislation and making a videotape of the three sessions available to staff through the Telehealth office. Further, the Telehealth presentation for all staff scheduled for March 2007 was to include a presentation in March on Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect. Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority exceeded this recommendation by assigning a Quality and Performance Improvement Committee to ensure prompt action on all possible future recommendations. The actions of the Saskatoon Health Region implementing this recommendation were previously reported on in the Children's Advocate Office's *2005 Annual Report.*	• Practice changed • Education provided • Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - SASKATOON HEALTH REGION

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
07-11795 That Saskatoon Regional Health Authority clarify the services provided to children and youth with Asperger's Syndrome and undertake to notify all service providers of expectations.	The Saskatoon Regional Health Authority communicated with their primary referral resources the circumstances under which they provide service to individuals with Asperger's Syndrome. There have been internal discussions with the Alvin Buckwold Centre regarding role definition for Asperger's and Autism. Regionally, there has been clarification for referent agencies such as the three school divisions and the Ministry of Social Services. There also has been clarification at Intake to fully explore Autism/Asperger's concerns in new referrals.	• Practice changed • Promoted public accountability

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF LEARNING)

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
CDR.49(99,01) That the Department of Community Resources and Employment, Corrections and Public Safety, Learning, Health and Health Authority jointly review the Saskatchewan Human Services Integrated Case Management model and create a process to ensure that it is implemented appropriately, including regular follow-up and review of identified children and youth who require this service.	No additional information has been received since the Children's Advocate *2005 Annual Report*, which stated the following: The Department of Learning advised the Children's Advocate Office that the inter-departmental project subcommittee of the Human Services Integration Forum is revising the 1998 Integrated Case Management Manual to address this recommendation. A training plan is being developed to ensure that it is implemented appropriately. In addition, the Human Services Integration Forum is currently considering a newly developed model for Integrated Case Management.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive the updated policy and training plan as recommended.
CDR.60(99) That the Department of Learning create a "broad based committee to examine the issue of court orders and school attendance, with the view to clarifying the policies, protocols and communications responsibilities around this issue; and, that the results of its deliberations be published widely" (Final Report, Recommendation 11, page 121).	No additional information has been received since the Children's Advocate Office *2005 Annual Report*, which stated the following: Saskatchewan Justice, Saskatchewan Corrections and Public Safety, Saskatchewan Health and Saskatchewan Learning have developed a committee to examine the issue of court orders and school attendance and have developed a Guide for Professionals to clarify communication between the respective systems on this issue. Saskatchewan Learning anticipates publishing this Guide during the fall of 2006.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive the published Guide as recommended.

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF LEARNING)

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
SYS.04(05) That Saskatchewan Learning enshrine the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in the Bullying and Harassment Prevention Model Policy.	Saskatchewan Learning provided the Children's Advocate Office with a copy of their Caring Respectful Schools: Bullying Prevention: A Model Policy, which incorporated the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* into the foundation of the policy, as recommended.	• Policy changed • Children's rights recognized • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate Office wishes to acknowledge that Saskatchewan Learning is the first Ministry to incorporate the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* into policy.

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
SYS.05(05) That Saskatchewan Learning incorporate youth voice into all aspects of the model policy.	Saskatchewan Learning forwarded to the Children's Advocate Office a copy of their Caring Respectful Schools: Bullying Prevention: A Model Policy, which incorporated youth voice into the guiding principles of the policy.	• Policy changed • Children's rights recognized • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate Office wishes to acknowledge that Saskatchewan Learning is the first Ministry to incorporate the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* into policy.

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

***THERE ARE NO ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN.**

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Action Taken	Outcome
CDR.63(99) That Government develop a model to ensure all child deaths are reviewed by an "educated eye" and that this model begin to be implemented by Jan 1, 2005.	The Government has explored the development and implementation of an effective and efficient approach to multi-disciplinary child death reviews through an Advisory Committee chaired by Saskatchewan Health. A proposal has been developed with several models for Government's consideration and implementation.	• Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability
SYS.02(05) That all government departments and agencies who provide services to children and families incorporate the judicial interpretation provided by the Supreme Court of Canada with regard to Section 43 into policy.	The Department of Corrections and Public Safety updated their Interface with the Department of Community Resources and Employment Policy to provide direction to their workers on how to manage a situation where a youth they are supervising has experienced corporal punishment in his/her family home. The Department of Community Resources advised the Children's Advocate Office that "the department took immediate action following the Supreme Court decision which included:...The Provincial Child Abuse Protocol was updated to include information about Section 43 and the Supreme Court decision...Community Resources requested legal counsel to review the sanctions in the Section 43 decision against child welfare legislation and policy to determine if changes were required. Based on the review of child welfare legislation and policies, the department was of the view that the policies of the department in relation to corporal punishment were consistent with the ruling of The Supreme Court of Canada".	• Services reviewed • Policy changed • Promoted public accountability
SYS.15(06) That the Government of Saskatchewan restate its commitment and re-establish its priority to address the issues of sexually exploited children and the recommendations presented by the Special Committee in its final report, as initiated in its 2002 Saskatchewan's Strategy to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.	The Minister of Justice and the Minister of Community Resources jointly announced a number of new initiatives to expand the provincial strategy on child and youth exploitation. The Minister of Community Resources restated the government's commitment to re-establish its priority to address the issue of sexually exploited children by stating "we remain committed to the 2001 recommendations of the All-Party Committee on the sexual exploitation of children and youth" while outlining new initiatives under development.	• Practice changed • Education provided • Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
	These new initiatives include: • Five new municipal police positions to directly deal with commercially and street level sexual exploitation of children and youth and to work closely with existing organizations and government agencies. • Immediate expansion of outreach and crisis intervention services in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. • Six new beds at the Ranch Ehrlo Society to provide province-wide emergency assessment/stabilization for sexually exploited children and youth. • A new province-wide education campaign aimed at preventing the sexual exploitation of children and youth. • A new prosecution unit that will work closely with the RCMP to strengthen the province's ability to incorporate the National Flagging System, a tracking system which assists in identifying long-term and dangerous offenders. Note: the Children's Advocate Office was provided with the Interdepartmental Steering Committee report outlining the Government's response and initiatives undertaken since 1997 to respond to sexually exploited children and youth. Government advised that they have fully implemented 45 of the 49 recommendations.	
SYS.16(06) was forwarded to more than one area of Government, please see the Interdepartmental Steering Committee.		

MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONS, PUBLIC SAFETY AND POLICING (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY)

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
CDR.49(99,01) was forwarded to more than one Ministry, please see the Ministry of Education section.		

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONS, PUBLIC SAFETY AND POLICING (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY)

Recommendations	Action Taken	Outcome
07-11287 That the Department of Corrections and Public Safety implement their plan to make suicide intervention training mandatory for all staff.	Suicide intervention training has become mandatory for all Young Offender Program (community and custody), Department of Corrections and Public Safety staff as recommended.	• Practice changed • Education provided • Promoted public accountability

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
07-11288 That the Department of Corrections and Public Safety make available the booklet, *Depression and Suicide: What You Need to Know*, to all Corrections and Public Safety staff.	The Department of Corrections and Public Safety made the booklet referenced in the recommendation available to Young Offender Program staff, as recommended. The Department of Corrections and Public Safety achieved this by posting the booklet on their Xtra-net site which is accessible to all staff.	• Education provided • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that the Department of Corrections and Public Safety exceeded this recommendation by having all custody and community managers pass on the information regarding this booklet to their staff and the Department of Health also sent copies of the booklet to each of the regional offices and facilities.

SCHOOL DIVISIONS

***THERE ARE NO ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH SCHOOL DIVISIONS.**

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - SUNWEST SCHOOL DIVISION

Recommendations	Action Taken	Outcome
07-11643 That the Sun West School Division review with their Child and Youth Counselling staff the importance of clear documentation when providing counselling services to children and young people.	The Sun West School Division acknowledged the importance of clear documentation and reviewed this with their Child and Youth Counselling staff as recommended.	• Practice changed • Promoted public accountability
07-11644 That the Sun West School Division review with their Child and Youth Counselling staff the importance of closure sessions when terminating clinical services with children and young people.	The Sun West School Division acknowledged the importance of closure sessions when terminating clinical services with children and young people and reviewed this with their Child and Youth Counselling staff as recommended.	• Practice changed • Promoted public accountability The Children's Advocate notes that the Sunwest School Division exceeded the recommendation by researching best practice and implementing various improvements including: providing counselling supervision by a registered psychologist; developing a collaborative relationship with Heartland Mental Health; and tracking students on counselling caseloads.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Action Taken	Action Required
SYS.21(06) a) That the interdepartmental, multi-disciplinary and inter-agency committee outlined in Recommendation SYS.16(06) with the Department of Community Resources as lead liaison, develop a continuum of services strategy that is consistent with, and complimentary to, the Government action strategy released in 2002, including safe houses, longer term housing for sexually exploited children, educational support, mental health, addiction services and health services, counseling and therapeutic resources, regardless of age or gender; and b) That this strategy have at its core: (i) a policy that speaks to the 'best interests and well-being of the child' as being the paramount consideration; (ii) that the service strategy be child-focused, family-centred and culturally sensitive; (iii) that specific strategies of case planning and management, based on risk assessments regarding the family, extended family and other living environmental conditions, be initiated to protect the child from further sexual exploitation, abuse or harm; and (iv) that the safety parameters utilized in other residential care facilities concerning age appropriate and gender mixing, be incorporated.	Department of Community Resources advised that the department is committed to a full legislative review. The Advocate's recommendations will be considered in the context of this review.	The Children's Advocate Office must receive a continuum of services strategy that addresses all subsections of this recommendation.

CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS - (INTERDEPARTMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE)

Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
SYS.16(06) a) That the Government expand the mandate and participation of its Interdepartmental Steering Committee to include: Aboriginal representation; experiential youth; enforcement agencies; community based organizations; and other relevant stakeholders;	The Department of Community Resources and the Interdepartmental Steering Committee are utilizing the Regional Intervention Committees to fulfill the above noted elements of this recommendation. a) The Interdepartmental Steering Committee responded by strengthening the ties between the Interdepartmental Steering Committee and Regional Intervention Committees, fulfilling this subsection of the recommendation with the exception of the involvement of youth.	• Practice changed • Services reviewed • Promoted public accountability

Recommendations	**Action Taken**	**Action Required**
b) That this Committee be supported with the resources and priority to establish a process of collaborative partnership of culturally sensitive service delivery to meet the needs, best interests and well-being of sexually exploited children through government departments, agencies, aboriginal communities and community-based organizations on a provincial basis; c) That the Committee review its communication process for information sharing and implementation process between itself and the Regional Intervention Committees; d) That Department of Community Resources be identified as having the responsibility of 'lead liaison department' in the coordination of action, planning and implementation of services stemming from this committee; and e) That Department of Community Resources report its progress to the Children's Advocate by December 31, 2006, for inclusion in the Children's Advocate Office Annual Report.	b) The Regional Intervention Committee membership provides the resources and collaborative partnerships between agencies and community-based organizations within each community across the province. c) The Chairs of the Regional Intervention Committee have been invited to participate at the Inter-Departmental Steering Committee table to enhance communication and information and the Interdepartmental Steering Committee. d) The Interdepartmental Steering Committee is jointly chaired by Saskatchewan Justice and Community Resources to emphasize that responsibility for addressing the sexual exploitation of children and youth is one that is shared across the provincial government. Government acknowledged that solutions rarely rest with any one department or community-based organization and that sexually exploited children and youth have multiple needs that call for an integrated response. Government indicates that the make-up of the Interdepartmental Steering Committee underscores the importance that government places on an integrated service response. The Interdepartmental Steering Committee will continue to be co-chaired by Saskatchewan Justice and Saskatchewan Community Resources. This rationale satisfied the spirit and intent of this subsection of the recommendation. e) The response was provided as requested.	
SYS.17(06) a) That the expanded provincial interdepartmental, multi-disciplinary and inter-agency committee envisioned in Children's Advocate Office recommendation SYS.16(06) be charged with the task of developing a service delivery model for Safe Houses with shared services delivery principles to address the complex needs of sexually exploited children that are culturally sensitive, but keep the best interests of the child as the principle of paramount importance; and b) That this committee develop the service delivery model of Safe Houses from a provincial perspective with a view to networking, sharing experiences, information and learning.	The Department of Community Resources advised that the development of a service delivery model for Safe Houses falls under the provincial child care resource continuum. As such, it lies within the purview of the Department of Community Resources. The Department of Community Resources approved the Children's Service Residential Care Standards Manual and provided a copy to the Children's Advocate Office. This manual outlines core requirements (programmatic and operational) for any residential group care program licensed under *The Residential Services Act*. *The Residential Care Standards* speak to Safe Houses and to all other forms of residential group care. Safe House programming will fall under and be required to meet program standards, as outlined in the Children's Service Residential Care Standards Manual. The Interdepartmental Steering Committee agrees with concepts as presented in SYS.17(06) (b) and undertakes to further explore how the committee can encourage and support networking among service providers.	• Policy changed • Promoted public accountability

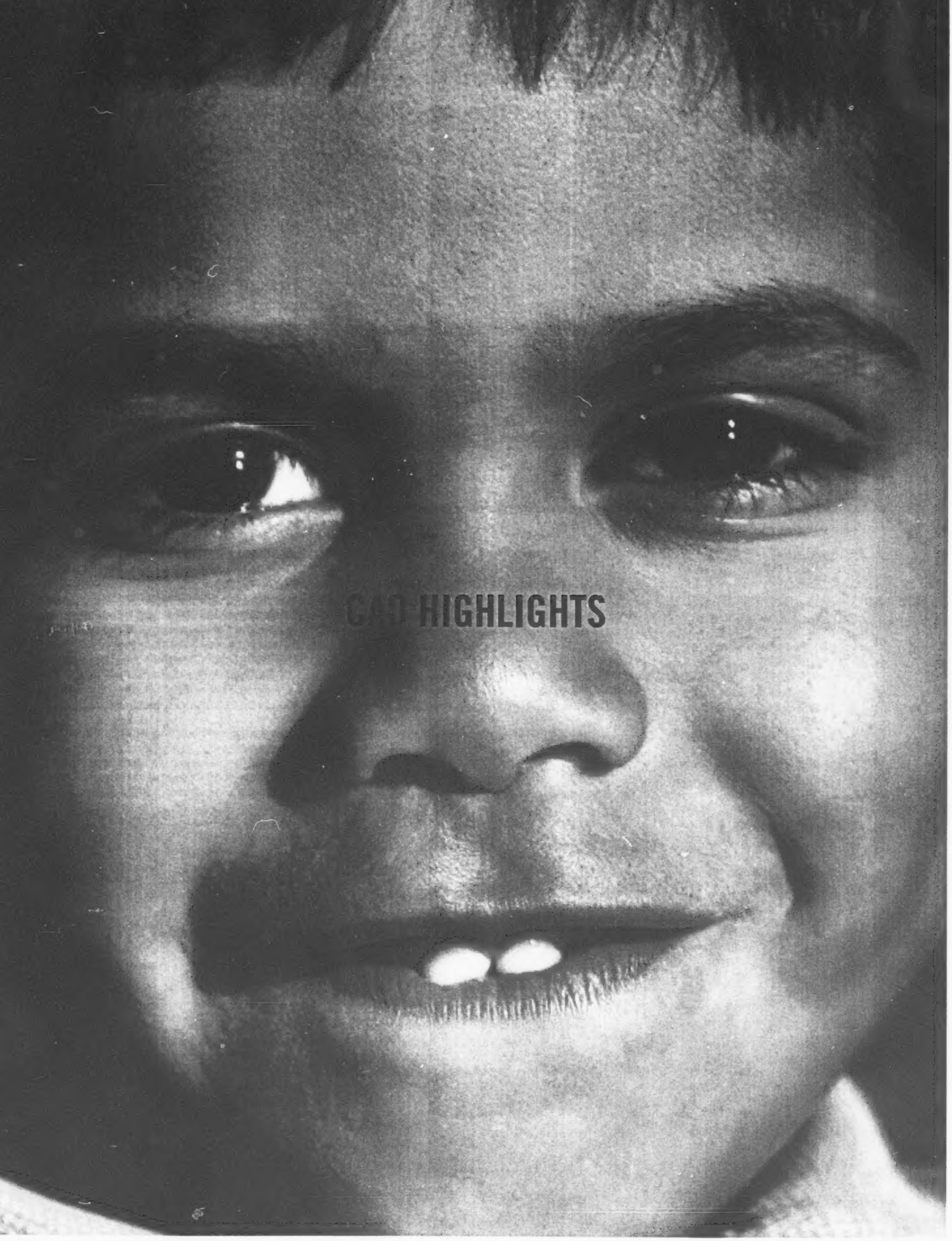
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (FORMERLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE)

ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action Taken	Action Required
06-10844 was forwarded to more than one Ministry, please see the Ministry of Social Services section.		

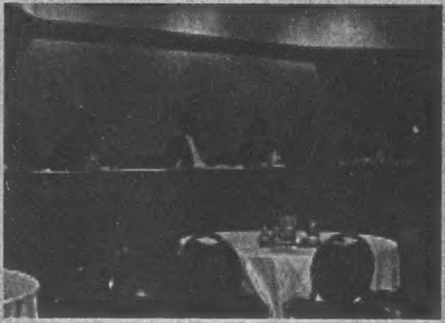
***THERE ARE NO CLOSED RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

CAO HIGHLIGHTS



Canadian Council of Provincial Child & Youth Advocates Meeting with Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean Wednesday, April 18, 2007, Rideau Hall

From Left to Right:
Dwight Bishop, Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman, Youth Services, Nova Scotia; Sylvie Godin, Commissioner and Vice-President, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, Québec; Bernard Richard, Ombudsman, Child and Youth Advocate, New Brunswick; Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth, British Columbia; Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean; Marv Bernstein, Children's Advocate, Children's Advocate Office, Saskatchewan; Judy Finlay, Former Provincial Advocate, The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Ontario; Darlene Neville, Child and Youth Advocate, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Newfoundland; Billie Schibler, Children's Advocate, The Office of the Children's Advocate, Manitoba; and John Mould, Children's Advocate, The Child and Youth Advocate, Alberta



2007 Mid-Winter Meeting, Canadian Bar Association Saskatchewan President's Forum on Access to Justice, Saskatoon, February 1, 2007

The panel included: Inez Cardinal, Q.C., CBA Saskatchewan Branch President; Marv Bernstein, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate; Chief Justice Donald Brenner, British Columbia Supreme Court; Sherry Fitzsimmons, McDougall Gauley LLP; Pamela Kovacs, McKercher McKercher & Whitmore LLP; Chief Justice Robert Laing, Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan; and Judge Gerald Morin, Provincial Court of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Foster Families Appreciation Banquet Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Monday, October 15, 2007

Shannon and Sheldon Hirschfeld, foster parents; Deb Davies, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Foster Families Association; and Marv Bernstein, Children's Advocate

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Community Barbeque, Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Marv Bernstein, Children's Advocate; and Vice-Chief Guy Lonechild, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

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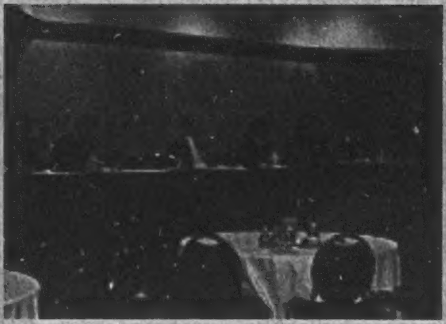

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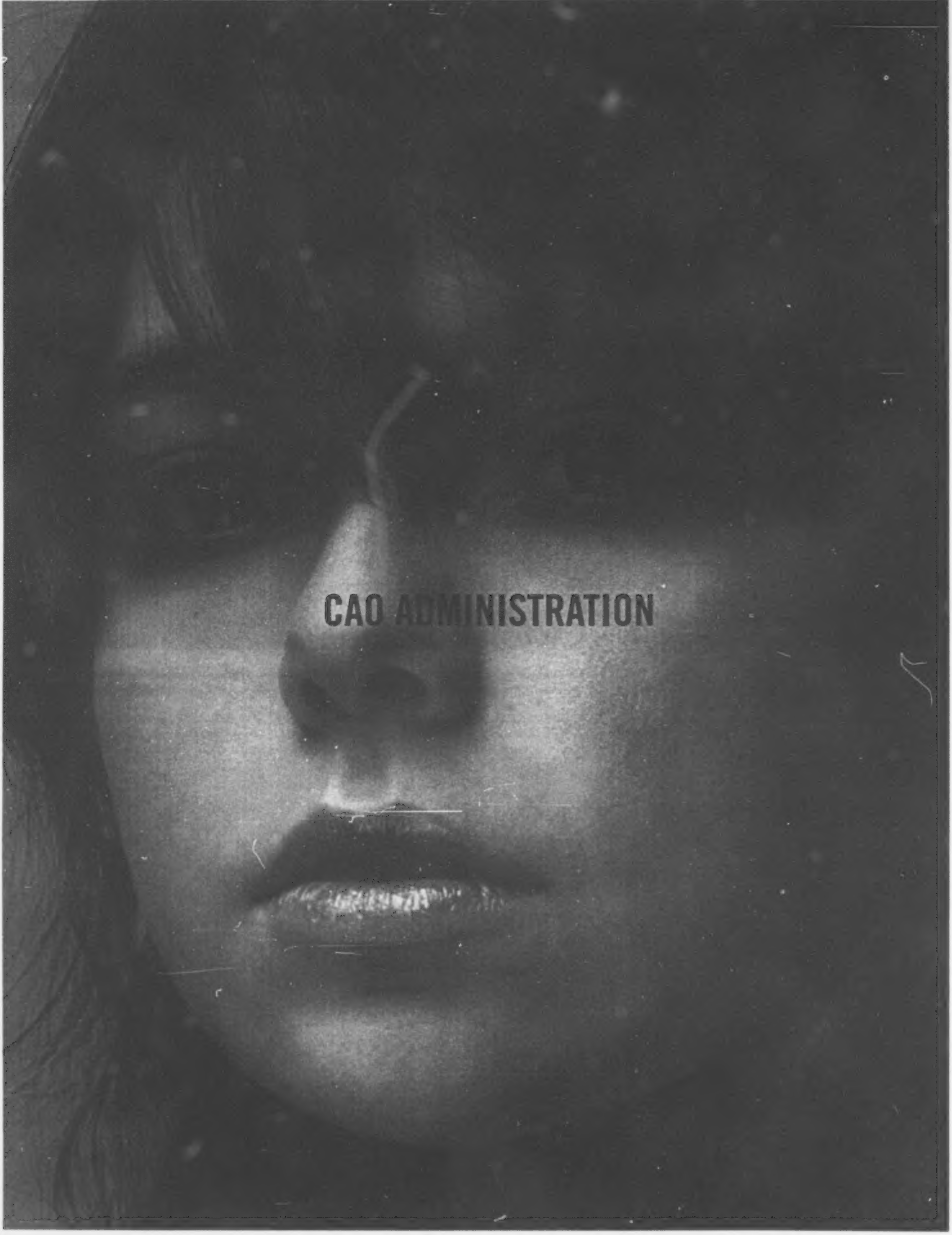
University of Saskatchewan College of Law Chains & Links: Human Rights Activism Conference November 1 & 2, 2007

Marv Bernstein, Children's Advocate; and Dean Brent Cotter, College of Law

NORTHERN
HAMLET OF
STONY RAPIDS
-OFFICE-

Northern Exchange visit to Stony Rapids and Black Lake, The Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office, Office of the Ombudsman and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, June 19, 20 & 21, 2007

Lorraine Pura, Education & Equity Advisor Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; Connie Braun, Ombudsman Assistant, Office of the Ombudsman; Karen Topolinski, Investigator, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; Kevin Fenwick, Provincial Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman; Roxane Schury, Advocate, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office; and Brenda Mercredi, Town Hall, Stony Rapids



CAO ADMINISTRATION

Children's Advocate Budget

BUDGETARY EXPENDITURES	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Personal Services	$763,000	$832,000	$1,000,000
Contractual Services	$146,000	$154,000	$154,000
Advertising, Printing & Publishing	$31,000	$32,000	$32,000
Travel & Business	$90,000	$88,000	$85,000
Supplies & Services	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000
Capital Assets	$12,000	$12,000	$12,000
One-time Funding	$28,000	$16,000	--
Budgetary Total	$1,077,000	$1,141,000	$1,290,000
STATUTORY EXPENDITURES			
Personal Services	$129,000	$154,000	$160,000
Statutory Total	$129,000	$154,000	$160,000
TOTAL	$1,206,000	$1,295,000	$1,450,000

STAFF (AS OF DECEMBER 2007)

Marvin Bernstein, Children's Advocate
Glenda Cooney, Deputy Children's Advocate
John Brand, Director of Advocacy Services
Chandra LePoudre, Intake Advocate
Rhonda Johannson, Advocate
Shaun Soonias, Advocate
Elaine Thomas, Advocate
Marcel St. Onge, Investigator
Roxane Schury, Investigator
Vanesa Vanstone, Investigator
Betty Anne Stevenson, Director of Communications
Bernie Rodier, Director of Administration
Caroline Sookocheff, Executive Administrative Assistant
Sandi Elliott, Administrative Assistant
Penny Fairburn, Administrative Assistant
Gordon Mayer, General Counsel (Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate)

COMMITTEE LIST

The Children's Advocate Office thanks the following individual members of the Multi-Disciplinary Advisory Team for their professional contributions and assistance to case reviews over the past year:

- Dr. Patricia Blakley, Medical Director, Kinsmen Children's Centre, Saskatoon Regional Health
- Dr. Gordon Kasian, Pediatric Intensivist, Saskatoon Regional Health, Retired
- Dr. Shaun Ladham, Chief Forensic Pathologist, Coroner's Office, Saskatchewan
- Mr. Kent Stewart, Chief Coroner, Saskatchewan
- Mr. Ron Pollock, Child Welfare Consultant
- Ms. Darlene Domshy, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network
- Mr. Murray Langgard, National Parole Board and retired Chief of Police, Regina
- Mr. Michael LeClaire, Retired Educator
- Ms. Terri Woods, Program Manager, Adult Community Mental Health, Addictions
- Ms. Joslyn Wuttunee, Retired RCMP

Former Members

- His Honourable Judge Don Bird, Q.C.
- Mr. Bob Green
- Ms. Nancy Masuskapoe

SASKATCHEWAN
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A Voice for Youth

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